Feyjoo y Montenegro

AN

ESSAY

ON

WOMAN.

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BRITISH MUSEUM
18 55
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FEYJOO Y MONTENEGRO (B.G.)

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AN

ESSAY

ON

WOMAN,

OR,

Phyſiological and Hiſtorical

DEFENCE

OF THE

FAIR SEX.

Tranſlated from the Spaniſh of

EL THEATRO CRITICO.

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DEDICATION.

*To Mrs. C***** of Somerſet-ſhire.*

MADAM,

AS on my reading the original of the following piece, you laid your commands on me to tranſlate it for the farther juſtification of the female ſex, I conceived no name ſo pro-

per as your's to uſher it into the world, but you, with that reſerve which, I muſt ſay, influences the whole tenor of your conduct, would only allow of putting the initial letter: the whole at full length, would, with ſubmiſſion, have ſerved the cauſe better, as jointly with Mrs. Rowe, and the Miſſes Miniffe, forming, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, a publicly known Somerſetſhire quadrumvirate, of females eminent for intellects; not to mention the ſuperior qualities of the heart, theſe being not ſo much the point in diſpute. I ſay publicly known, as otherwiſe, we can both

depoſe

depoſe that our county, which we by no means pretend to exalt above the other parts of Britain, affords, amidſt the ſhades of privacy, many females, whoſe talents and accompliſhments might confound all the rude obloquy thrown out againſt your amiable ſex; characters ſo ſublime, ſo endearing, ſo complete in every relation of life, as to anſwer the following commendation which Adam gives to Raphæl of his admired Eve.

So abſolute ſhe ſeems,
And in herſelf compleat, ſo well to know
Her own, that what ſhe wills to do or ſay,
Seems wiſeſt, virtuouſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt;
Authority;

Authority and reaſon on her wait;
And to conſummate all,
Greatneſs of mind, and nobleneſs, their ſeat
Build in her loveliеſt, and create an awe
About her as a guard angelic plac'd.

I remember you was deſirous of knowing ſomething of the work, and author, but herein I can give you little ſatisfaction. Not a great man dies in France, Holland, Germany, and Italy, but we have ſome account of him in the periodical pieces; whereas, concerning the ſtate of literature in Spain, we ſeem kept in the dark. The ſum of all I know is, that the work is called, *Theatro Critico Univerſal*; conſiſts of ſeveral volumes

in

in large octavo, containing a vaſt variety of diſcourſes intended to explode vulgar errors. The author was Benedict Feijoo who, embracing the Monaſtic ſtate, became General of the Order of St. Benedict, a dignity of great conſideration, beſides which; his immenſe erudition, being joined with wit and an excellent talent at compoſition, advanced him to other honours both academical and eccleſiaſtic. In Spain, Madam, a work paſſes through ſeveral examinations before admitted to the preſs, as a fence againſt heterodoxy, and one of the examiners (who are always

men of diſtinguiſhed characters, in his report, gives the following portraiture of our author, which, to you, I need not disfigure by a tranſlation: *Quod enim genus diſciplinæ eſt, inquo verſatus non ſit, atque ita eximie verſatus, quod ineo ſolo elaboraſſe? eſic nimirum omnia complexus, ut ne unus quidum quiſquam ſingula: rurſus ita ad ſummum, quaſi nihil aliud præteræ didiciſſet.* The good Benedictine ever exerted his talents to a worthy end, becoming an honeſt member of ſociety; accordingly, his candour and courage in the cauſe of truth, prompted him to expoſe ſome vulgar errors which the uſages of

the

the Roman church had ſanctified, but which he accounted hurtful to eſſential religion; and for this temerity the inquiſition laid their hands on him. Such, however, is the regard paid to ſingular virtue and literature, meeting in one perſon, that the throne itſelf is ſaid to have interpoſed in Father Fejoo's favour, and he was ſet at liberty. This is a circumſtance which I know will recommend him to your favour, and to that of moſt of your ſex, whom I have obſerved zealouſly to countenance courage and francneſs, deſpiſing all duplicity and diſſimulation, as the ſure marks of an abject ſpirit;

and theſe diſpoſitions in you are powerful incentives to a ſuitable; behaviour in us. The manners of women, I am in earneſt, turn the ſcale of the public manners. Without flattery, I look upon the declared patronage of the fair ſex, to be no ſlender bulwark to political liberty; and may they ever, perſevere in ſuch generous ſentiments!

I am afraid I have drawn up a tedious dedication to you; but I conclude with an humble, though not unreaſonable requeſt. It is, that as in compliance with your deſire, I have appeared in print,

which

which to one ſo fond of the *falentis ſemita vitæ*, coſts not a little, ſhould I thereby incur the public deriſion, I may find an aſylum in the continuance, or rather increaſe of your eſteem and favour which will blunt the edge of all other vexations.

I am,

MADAM

Your moſt humble Servant

The Tranſlator.

The

The Reader is desired kindly to excuse the following ERRATA:

Page 39. l. 18. r. stimulations.
44. l. 7. r. Barclay's suffrage.
51. l. 6. r. Brunchaut.
58. l. 8. r. parrots.
59. l. 16. r. tranquillity.
64. l. 1. r. Manlius.
65. l. 2. r. Gaul.
66. l. 10. r. deliverance. Behold a
89. l. 3. r. I.
102. l. 6. r. pronounce the
l. 8. r. vouchsafe.
139. l. 2. r. debility.
160. l. 7. r. Artamenes or

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A DEFENCE

A DEFENCE of WOMEN.

SECTION I.

THE taſk I now undertake is ſomething arduous, and not without danger. It is not only againſt the ignorant vulgar that I enter the liſts. To defend women in general is come to be the ſame thing as to affront, and conſequently, offend the generality of men, who

build the ſuper-eminence of their ſex on the contempt of the other.

We have ſeen, in our time, ſays a French author, what our fathers never would have imagined. We have ſeen Frenchmen take their pen in hand purely to propagate a contempt of women.

Among our anceſtors, perſons convicted of having ſpoken ill of women, were not allowed to come into the public aſſemblies, or to be preſent at tournaments, or if they took ſuch liberties, were ignominouſly turned out. And this was not merely from humanity or gallantry, but it was a point of policy. They were perſuaded that the more women ſee themſelves reſpected,

reſpected, the more they endeavour to deſerve reſpect; that however a governor may cultivate our underſtanding, our temper receives its caſt from women, at that age, when ſoft propenſities prompt us to offer them the firſt fruits of our heart; that many a one, diſtinguiſhed for the exertion of noble ſentiments, would poſſibly have had only a vulgar ſoul, had not the deſire of pleaſing them awakened his ſelf-love. Theodoret believed Adam to have been naturally of a ſavage diſpoſition, but civilized by the amiable deportment and ſoothing blandiſhments of his helpmate. *Evam liberaſſe a belluina feritate virum ſuum Adam:* i. e. Eve reclaimed her huſband Adam from his brutal ferocity.

In the moral part of their compoſition, ſay thoſe unnatural railers, women are all vice, and their phyſical part is full of imperfections. The very name of woman is an abomination among the Tartars, never to be written or uttered: inſtead of maiden or woman, they ſay, *a veiled, mother of a family.* The hiſtory of Tamerlan tells us, that meeting with the word woman in a letter to him from Bajazet, that martial prince cried out with indignation: *This mad fellow of a turk! to mention ſuch a polluted name in a letter to me!* But it is at their ſhallow intellects and the contracted knowledge of women, that ſuch ill-mannered malice chiefly points its batteries; and I, to overthrow them, ſhall, after a curſory vindica-

tion

tion of the ſex in other articles, diſcourſe more fully on their capacity for every ſcience, and the moſt ſublime parts of knowledge, adducing authentic examples in ſupport of my aſſertions.

Mahomet, the falſe prophet, has excluded women from that chimerical paradiſe, which his debauched imagination has planted for his followers*,

* The learned author, it ſeems, had imbibed the common miſtake for ſuch, the writer of the following paſſage affirms it to be; and one better acquainted with the Turkiſh principles and manners it will be difficult to find.—" I aſ-
" ſure you it is certainly falſe; though com-
" monly believed in our parts of the world, that
" Mahomet excludes women from any ſhare
" in a future happy ſtate. He was too much a gen-

and makes all their felicity to conſiſt in beholding, from without, the men wallowing in luxury and magnificence within. Married women, to be ſure, muſt

" a gentleman, and loved the fair ſex too well,
" to uſe them ſo barbarouſly. On the con-
" trary, he promiſes a very fine paradiſe to the
" Turkiſh women. He ſays, indeed, that this
" paradiſe will be a ſeparate place from that
" of their huſbands; but I fancy the moſt part
" of them will not like it the worſe for that;
" and that the regret of this ſeparation will
" not render their paradiſe the leſs agreeable.
" It remains to tell you, that the virtues which
" Mahomet requires of the women, to merit
" the enjoyment of future happineſs, are not
" to live in ſuch a manner as to become uſe-
" leſs to the world, but to employ themſelves
" as much as poſſible, in making little muſ-
" ſulmans. The virgins, who die virgins, and
" the widows who marry not again, dying in
" mortal ſin, are excluded out of paradiſe: For
" woman, ſays he, not being capable to ma-

" nage

muſt account it no ſmall part of that bliſsful ſtate of voluptuouſneſs, to ſee their huſbands in the arms of other

 women,

" nage the affairs of ſtate, nor to ſupport the " fatigues of war, God has not ordered them " to govern or reform the world; but he has " entruſted them with an office which is not " leſs honourable; even that of multiply- " ing the human race: and ſuch as, out of " malice or lazineſs, do not make it their bu- " ſineſs to bear or to breed children, fulfil not " the duty of their vocation, and rebel againſt " the commands of God. Here are maxims " for you, prodigiouſly contrary to thoſe of " your convents. What will become of your " ſaint Catharines, your ſaint Thereſas, your " ſaint Claras, and the whole bead-roll of your " holy virgins and widows? who, if they are to " be judged by this ſyſtem of virtue, will be " found to have been infamous creatures, that " paſſed their lives in moſt abominable liber- " tiniſm." Lady M.W.M's Letters. Vol. III.

women, whom that viſionary has feigned to be formed anew for thoſe gratifications. That ſuch a chimera could ever gain credit in a great part of the world, is one of the moſt palpable tokens of man's weakneſs and depravity.

But to exclude women from happineſs in the other world, or deny them the leaſt ſpark of merit in this, ſeems nearly tantamount; yet how do the very dregs of the people, men of the moſt abandoned morals, ſpeak of the ſex as a common ſewer of vice, folly, and ignorance. They, indeed, find their contumelious railings ſupported by ſarcaſms and invectives in books. A primitive father defines woman *an animal that delights in finery*. There

was

was a celebrated epigram among the Greeks, on Jupiter's being one day ſo provoked by Juno's freaks, that driving her out of the empyreum, he kept her ſuſpended in the air for ſome time, and that in the interim of this chaſtiſement, the preſumptuous Ixion embraced, inſtead of the goddeſs, that cloud, which produced the firſt Centaurs. The ſage rabbis keep up a tradition not very far from that fable, concerning the firſt and moſt conſequential of all marriages. They relate that Adam, his lovely Eve's temper not correſponding with her form, repudiated her for the ſpace of a hundred and thirty years, but not being able to bear life without the pleaſureable commerce of women, he had one Maama and three other beautiful

concubines,

concubines, and that his iſſue by them were called dæmons.

Many will ſcarce allow that the ſex affords one ſingle good woman; and in thoſe whoſe outward deportment ſpeaks a conſtellation of virtues within, it is conſtrued deſign and hypocriſy; and a modeſt countenance reviled as the indication of a libidinous mind:

Aſpera ſi viſa eſt, rigidaſque imitata Sabinas,
Velle, ſed ex alto diſſimulare puta.

She may ſeem a prude, and affect the auſterity of a Sabine dame, but it is all a maſk.*

To

* Two ſmarter lines on this head, perhaps cannot be produced than theſe of Congreve.

Women are like tricks done by ſlight of hand,
Which to admire, you muſt not underſtand.

To ſuch inſolent calumny the moſt ſuitable return is contempt and indignation. It has been obſerved, that not a few of thoſe, who on all occaſions give no quarter to the ſex, and paint them in the worſt colours, are moſt earneſt in ſoliciting their favours. Euripides, who ſo outrageouſly inveighs againſt women in his tragedies, was, according to Athæneus and Stobeus, extremely addicted to them in private. On the ſtage he raged againſt them, and idolized them in the chamber. Bocace, whoſe lacivouſneſs could ſcarce be exceeded, wrote a virulent ſatyr againſt women, with the title of LABERYNTO DEL AMOR: THE MAZE OF LOVE. What could be his meaning in this? Perhaps, he was for palming it on the world as his real

ſentiment,

ſentiment, as a cloak to his turpitude. Perhaps, his brutiſh gratifications had created ſuch a ſatiety and diſguſt, as made the whole ſex appear to him all one loathſome heap of defects. It may likewiſe be from revenge, at having met with repulſes; for ſuch men have been known, who give a woman a bad character only becauſe ſhe would not ſtain her virtue by complying with their deſires. Nay, this unjuſt reſentment has vented itſelf in worſe effects, a remarkable inſtance of which is, the cataſtrophe of Miſs Douglas, an Iriſh lady of extraordinary beauty, when one Mr. William Leout, incenſed at her rejecting his ſolicitations, accuſed her of high-treaſon; and being convicted on ſuborned evidence, ſhe was put to

death.

death. Leout himſelf afterwards confeſſed the whole guilt. This is related by La Mothe le Vayer. *Opuſc. Scept.*

I am far from denying that great crimes have been committed by women; but were we to rake into the genealogy of their enormities, how many ſhould we find originally proceeding from artful enticements and audacious purſuits of our ſex. Let him who would have all women good, ſet about converting all men. Nature has implanted modeſty in them, as a fence againſt all the batteries of appetite; and it is very ſeldom that the firſt breach in this fence is made from within the place. As for ſome paſſages in the ſcriptures, which ſeem to

bear

bear hard againſt the women, they are undoubtedly to be underſtood only of the wicked and perverſe, as unqueſtionably ſuch there are. And if levelled at the whole ſex in common, they afford no direct proof againſt them, for the phyſicians of ſouls cry out againſt women, as the phyſicians of bodies do againſt fruits; good, uſeful and beautiful in themſelves, and noxious only by our frequent abuſes. Beſides, every body knows the latitude allowed an orator in ſetting forth a danger, when it is to avert the evil conſequences. I call on thoſe who pronounce women to be actually more vicious than our own ſex, to reconcile ſuch a charge with the church's giving them, in a particular manner, the epithet of *devout*. What can they

anſwer,

anſwer to ſo many luminaries, no leſs eminent for parts than piety, who agree that more women will be ſaved than men, though the latter out number the former? Which they ground, as indeed it cannot be grounded on any thing elſe, on their having obſerved them to be more inclined to every work of piety. We muſt turn our backs on common ſenſe, or own, with Plutarch, that they have the ſame virtues as we; and that the diſtinction of ſex, not reſiding in the minds, theirs is as capable of learning and ratiocination as thoſe of men. A thouſand families verify what is obſerved in many plants and animals, that the female is preferable to the male. It is therefore a ſaying quite unworthy of Thucidides, *That a woman's greateſt com-*

commendation is, not to be ſpoken of, neither well nor ill. And Xenophon's opinion is not much better, that, *for a marriage to be happy, the bride ſhould have ſeen or heard very little before ſhe comes over the bride-groom's threſhold*; that is, *the leſs ſhe knows of the world the better.*

Here, methinks, adverſaries riſe up on all ſides, and ſtun me with that common, but ſenſeleſs clamour, that women are the cauſe of all evil; and in proof of it, the very populace are continually roaring out, *Caba ruined Spain**, and, *Eve the world.*

But

* This lady, daughter to count Julian governour of Ceuta in Africa, was called Florinda Caba. Having been forced by Roderigo, king

But the former aſſertion is abſolutely falſe. Count Julian was the perſon who drew over the Moors into Spain, without being in the leaſt inſtigated to it by his daughter, who did only (and can ſhe be blamed for that?) make known to her father the injury done to her. Unhappy ſex indeed! if, on receiving the greateſt injury, they muſt

 not

king of Spain, acquainted her father with the outrage. He for ſome time concealed his reſentment, till the Arabs having a powerful army in Africa, he made uſe of that pretence for requeſting the king's leave to go to his government. Accordingly, having got together his moſt valuable effects, he went over to Ceuta with his ſpouſe. Soon after pretending that ſhe was given over by the phyſicians, he begged of the king to allow his daughter to come and pay her laſt reſpects to her mother. Julian now ſeeing his wife and family ſafe, communicated the

ebullitions

not be allowed the ſlender comfort of diſcloſing their convulſed minds to a father or a ſpouſe! They only who can go about ſuch a brutiſh attempt would wiſh them under ſuch a reſtraint. Beſides, if at any time the revenge has been exceſſive, it is not the weak ſuffering party who is to be blamed, but the executor of the vengeance,

ebullitions of his heart to Muza, the Arabian general, engaging to make him maſter of all Spain if he would ſupply him with forces. Muza immediately ſent him 12,000 men, with which he landed and ſubdued part of Spain, and brought in the Arabs, who compleated the conqueſt. In commemoration of this fatal revenge, Florinda became a common name for bitches, but never uſed as a chriſtian name; and her father falling under a ſuſpicion of holding intelligence with the Chriſtians againſt the Arabs, was put to death in the year 717.

geance, and the author of the crime which gave occaſion to it; ſo that the whole guilt lies among men.

The ſecond inſtance no more proves women to be generally worſe than men, than as it proves angels to be generally worſe than women; for, as Adam was inticed to ſin by a woman, ſo was woman inticed by an angel. Who ſinned moſt, whether Adam or Eve, ſtill remains a queſtion, the fathers themſelves being divided about it. Indeed, what Cayetan alledges in behalf of Eve, as impoſed upon by a creature of much more exalted powers and faculties than herſelf, is a circumſtance not applicable to Adam, and, which muſt be owned, no ſmall extenuation of her guilt.

SECTION II.

TO proceed from the moral to the phyſical part, as more immediately relative to our preſent purpoſe, the preference of the robuſt ſex to the delicate, ſex is accounted, beyond all queſtion, as ſelf-evident. Great numbers make no ſcruple to call a woman an imperfect, and even monſtrous animal; and affirm, that nature, in generation, always intends a male, and that it is only from miſtake or deficiency either of the matter or the faculty, that a woman is produced.

Excellent philoſophers truly! So nature intends its own deſtruction, as without the concurrence of both ſexes, the ſpecies cannot be maintained; and

human

human nature would, in this its capital operation, fail as often as it hits, the number of both ſexes being in all countries very nearly equal.* And how can the formation of woman be attributed to a deficiency or defect in the matter and faculty they being generally iſſue of fathers, who, beſides the vigour of age, are generally ſanguine, vegete, and robuſt? Had man preſerved his original innocence, as then there would have been none of theſe ſuppoſed deficiencies, would there likewiſe have been no women engendered, no propagation of the human ſpecies?

 I know

* Moſt political arithmeticians, allow about 18 males, to 17 females, as a ſurplus to balance the expences of war, the ſea, and other dangers which fall to man's lot.

I know that a certain writer, rather than lay aſide his declared ſpleen againſt the other ſex, has digeſted that abſurdity, groſs as it is. This was Almaricus, a doctor at Paris in the twelfth century, who, among other errors, advances, that had the ſtate of innocence continued, every individual of our ſpecies would have come into exiſtence a complete man; and that God would have created them by himſelf, as he created Adam.

This Almaric was ſuch a blind implicit follower of Ariſtotle, that all, or the greater part of his errors, were conſequences which he drew from the doctrines of that philoſopher; for finding Ariſtotle intimating, and not only in one part of his works, that woman

is a defective animal, and the generation of her purely fortuitous and foreign from nature's intent, Almaricus infers, that there would have been no women in the ſtate of innocence. Thus an error in phyſics is often productive of hereſy in divinity.

But this ſubmiſſive attachment of Almaricus to Ariſtotle proved an ugly affair to both: for Almaric's errors were condemned in a council at Paris, held in the year 1209; and the ſame council prohibited the reading of Ariſtotle's books, pope Gregory IX. ratifying the prohibition by bull. Almaric having been in his grave above a twelvemonth before his tenets underwent this public diſgrace, his bones were digged up, and caſt into a com-

mon ſewer, or ſome other place, little fit to be a receptacle for human remains.

We are not to be abſolutely ſwayed by any doctor or doctors, however learned and knowing in other reſpects, who will aſſert the female ſex to be deficient, many perſons of ſenſe having gone very deep into Almaric's opinion, without running into his error. Ariſtotle, cannot be doubted to have acted a very diſhonourable part againſt woman, as not only expatiating with complacency on their phyſical defects, but with ſtill greater acrimony inveighs againſt their morals, that one would be inclined to think him of a frigid complexion, and innate natural averſion from the ſex; quite the reverſe.

He

He was not only a moſt fond and tender huſband to both his wives (for it ſeems, he was twice married) but with the firſt, called Pythais, daughter, or ac- according to others, niece of Hermias, tyrant of Aterneum; he was ſo en- amoured, that he even offered incence to her as a deity. He is moreover, like- wiſe taxed with a paſſion for a little ſervant girl, which carried him to very indecent exceſſes, though Plutarch will believe nothing of the matter; but here Theo- critas of Chios, author of a keen epi- gram againſt Ariſtotle, for his inven- tive leachery, is rather to be believed, being cotemporary with Ariſtotle, whereas Plutarch, was much poſterior to him; ſo that *prince of philoſophers*, may ſtand for an inſtance, that, as we have ſaid above, acrimony againſt

women, is often, and even generally accompanied with, if not proceeding from a licentious inclination to them.

From the ſame phyſical error of reviling woman, as an imperfect creature, ſprung another theological error, combated by St. Auſtin, in his *City of God, Book XXII. Chap. XVII.* and of which, the Partiſans, take upon them to ſay, that at the univerſal reſurrection, this imperfect work, will be rendered perfect, by a change of ſex; all the women, becoming men, grace being then to complete that work, which nature had left, only as it were, rough hewn.

This error, is a kin to that of the infatuated alchymiſts, who, from their maxim, that nature, in the production

of

of metals, always intending the generation of gold, it is only from a deficiency of the virtue, or faculty, that it falls ſhort, and ſtops in ſome other metal, pretend that their ſcience completes the operation, and tranſmutes into gold, what nature left iron. But after all, this error may be eaſily borne with, as not affecting any article of faith, and becauſe, whatever becomes of nature's intention and the imaginary ability of ſcience, gold is unqueſtionably the moſt noble metal, all other, being of a quality much inferior; but, with regard to our queſtion, the aſſertion, that nature always intends the production of male, and, that in a female, its operation miſcarries, is abſolutely falſe, and, much more, that this aſſertion, will be rectified, at the univerſal reſurrection.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Not that I approve the rant of Zacutus Luſitanus, who, in his introduction to the treatiſe *de Morbis Mulierum*, advances ſeveral far-fetch'd reaſons for the phyſical ſuperiority of women, when the argument might have been diſcuſſed with others much more ſpecious. But it is only an equality, and not their ſuperiority, which I have taken on myſelf to maintain.

And, to begin with the three qualities, in which men ſeem to have a declared advantage over women, *ſtrength*, *fortitude*, and *prudence*, omitting for the preſent, the underſtanding, which ſhall be treated of ſeperately, and more in form. Were I to give up thoſe qualities, ſtill, an equivalent remains to women;

women; with thoſe maſculine endowments, they can contraſt *beauty*, *gentleneſs*, and *candour*.

Strength, which is a quality of the body, may be conſidered, as counterbalanced by beauty, both being qualities of the body. Many will give the preference to the latter, and rightly, were the worth of qualities to be eſtimated, only by the pleaſure of the eye. But, as far as public utility, is to be preferred to a ſenſitive gratification, ſo far I think, ſtrength is to be valued above beauty. To the ſtrength of man, the world owes many eſſential advantages, it is the baſis of the three pillars of every ſtate, war, agriculture, and mechanics. As to the beauty of women, I know of no real

benefit

benefit or advantage accruing from it, unleſs by pure accident. Some, indeed, vilify it, as far from beneficial, being often the cauſe of guilt and wretchedneſs, kindling inordinate deſires, exciting quarrels, and, bringing a load of cares, reſtrictions, and ſolicitudes on thoſe who have the keeping of it.

But, this accuſation is groundleſs, and proceeds from want of reflection. For, were all women ill-favoured, thoſe who had the feweſt flaws would be as powerful attractives, as the moſt piquant beauties in our days, and, conſequently, would do the like miſchiefs.

The leaſt ugly of all the Grecian dames would cauſe a ſecond Troy to be laid in aſhes, no leſs than the

beautiful

beautiful Helena; and one with no pretenſions to beauty would, in the palace of a Rodrigo, as effectually prove the overthrow of Spain as the charming La Caba. Inordinate paſſions rage no leſs in countries where the women have no great ſhare of beauty, than in thoſe where they are moſt celebrated for allurements; even in Moſcovy, which, for beautiful women, exceeds all the other ſtates of Europe, incontinency, does not run into thoſe exceſſes ſo flagrant in other countries; and, for conjugal fidelity they are exemplary.

Beauty, therefore, is not in itſelf the cauſe of the many evils imputed to it; yet, in the preſent queſtion, ſtrength has my ſuffrage. I account it a quality much more valuable than beauty;

and

and, though men, may highly value themſelves in this reſpect, the women, are not without a reply; and for this they are furniſhed with an aphoriſm, received by many learned men, and, particularly, a whole celebrated ſchool; which has decided the will to be a more noble faculty than the underſtanding. Now this favours the female cauſe, for, though ſtrength, as more valuable, be preferred by the underſtanding, beauty, as more amiable, has a greater ſway over the will.

To the quality of *fortitude* which dignifies men, may be oppoſed that *gentleneſs* which ſo highly recommends woman. But here let it be noticed, that I am not talking of theſe, or other qualities, conſidered formally as virtues,

virtues, they being phyſical, only as inherent, and emaning from the conſtitution; which, originally, is neutral, either to good or bad; and thus they may be better termed flexibility, or inflexibility of temper, than fortitude or docility, which are of moral origin.

I ſhall be told, that the docility of women, is apt to degenerate into levity; and I anſwer, that the fortitude of men, is as near a kin to obſtinacy. Firmneſs in good, I own to be often productive of great benefits; but, it will alſo be granted, that, obſtinacy in evil, is the cauſe of great miſchiefs. As to ſaying, that an invincible adherence to good or evil, belongs only to angels, I anſwer, that this is not

ſo very certain, as not to be denied by many great divines; and many properties, which, in ſuperior natures, ariſe from their excellency, in inferior eſſences, proceed from their imperfection. Angels, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, the more perfect they are, the fewer their modes of underſtanding; whereas in men, a limitation of ideas is a defect. In angels, ſtudy would be a blemiſh, and clog to their intellects; whereas, it enlightens and enlarges thoſe of man.

The prudence of man, is counterbalanced by the candour of women; though a greater value is due to the latter, as it would be evidently much better for mankind, that every individual were very candid, than very pru-

dent. Poets, in their pictures of the golden age, deſcribed men open, frank and friendly, not a word of prudence and ſagacity.

If it be objected, that a great deal of what is called candour in woman, is weakneſs and indiſcretion; I reply, that not leſs of man's vaunted prudence, is fraud, duplicity, and treachery, which is much worſe. And, even that indiſcreet frankneſs of the heart, ſometimes diſcloſing itſelf, without conſulting reaſon, is good, conſidered as a mark or ſign of the perſon's diſpoſition. No body being ignorant of his own vices, he who is conſcious of their multitude, or infamy, is careful to ſtop up every chink of his heart, againſt the ſnares

of curioſity. He who lives irregularly in his houſe, ſeldom leaves the door open for obſervation. Circumſpection, though very compatible with goodneſs, is the inſeparable companion of malignity, and, on the other hand, he who readily diſcharges his mind, knows it to contain nothing which can give much offence. Thus, the candour of woman is always eſteemable, as a perfection, when agreeable to right reaſon; and when otherwiſe, as a good ſign of inward purity.

SECTION IV.

Beſides the good qualities before expreſſed, muſt be added to the fair-ſex's account, modeſty, the moſt beautiful, and moſt excellent of all; and

ſo

ſo congenial to woman, as not to leave them, even in death, if Pliny is to be credited; who tells us, that the bodies of drowned men, float with their face upward, and thoſe of drowned women, downwards; *veluti pudori defunctarum parcente natura*, lib. 7. cap. 17. *Nature, as it were, ſpareing the modeſty of women, dying in this manner.*

Another philoſopher being aſked what colour moſt became a woman's face, anſwered both wittily and truly, that of modeſty; and, I really eſteem it, one of the moſt amiable excellencies in the women, above the men. Modeſty is a rampart thrown up by nature, between virtue and vice; an ingenious Frenchman calls it, the ſhade of fine ſouls,

and the viſible impreſs of virtue; and St. Barnard, enlarging on its excellence, terms it, the gem of good manners, the flambeau of purity, the ſiſter of continence, the guard of reputation, the glory of life, the ſeat of virtue, the penegyric of the temper, and the enſign of every lovely quality (Serm. 86, in Cant.) The ſullen Diogenes himſelf, calls it the tint of virtue; it is in reality, the ſtrong redoubt, covering the whole caſtle of the ſoul, againſt the batteries of vice, and which, as Gregory Nazianſen ſays, being once beaten down, or ſurrendered, every wickedneſs, makes its way in without reſiſtance.

Protinus extincto ſubeunt mala cuncta pudore.

The extinction of modeſty, is the inlet to every evil.

It

It will be ſaid, that ſhame is, to be ſure, an excellent preſervation againſt outward acts, but having no influence on the inward aſſent and deliberations of the mind, the way ſtill lies open for vice to perpetrate its ſchemes through thoſe inviſible aſſaults, which are not to be kept off by the fence of bluſhing modeſty: and, were it ſo, ſtill is modeſty a moſt valuable preſervative, as preventing crimes without number, and all their fatal conſequences. But, on reflection, it will appear to be a guard, if not entirely, yet, in a great meaſure, againſt even ſilent and inviſible irruptions, that they do not break out beyond the hidden receſſes of the ſoul: internal ſtimilations to vice, ſeldom obtruding

on him, who does not foment them by commiſſion; and this is what ſtrengthens vicious inclinations, ſo as to ſtrike their roots deep, and to be continually bringing forth pernicious fruit; without theſe, depravity may indeed, inſinuate itſelf into the mind, but its ſtay is ſhort, as that of a ſtranger; it takes not up its abode, as one of the family, and much leſs, as miſtreſs of the houſe

The paſſions, when kept at ſhort allowance, and apart from thoſe objects which foment them, flag and carry on their operations but languidly, eſpecially in perſons of delicate modeſty. The intercourſe between the heart and the viſage, is ſo open and ready, that they will watch over any

ſecret

ſecret machinations carrying on in the privacy of the heart, leſt they ſhould break forth to public view in the countenance. And, indeed, the latent motions, are continually betraying themſelves on the cheeks, and there is no other way of forming conjectures on objects, inviſible in themſelves, than by the hue of ſhame, and thus the fear, leſt the movements of the ſoul be read in the countenance, may, in woman, be a ſalutary check againſt the internal riſings either of voluptuouſneſs, or malignity.

To the premiſes, may be added, that in many women, their modeſty has been ſuch, as to ſtand in awe of their very ſelves. This height of modeſty, ſo excellently diſcuſſed by the

moſt

moſt ingenious father Veyras, in one of his ſermons, is ſo far from being merely idle and imaginary, as ſome low thoughted minds pronounce, is real and powerfully prevails in thoſe of a more refined caſt. This Demetrius Phalereus well knew, when inſtructing the youth of Athens, he told them; within doors, reſpect your fathers; abroad, all who ſee you; and, when alone, reſpect yourſelves.

SECTION V.

The endowments, which I have on evident grounds, attributed to women, balance, and perhaps ſurpaſs the qualities which diſtinguiſh men, but, who ſhall decide this proceſs? Were it my province, my verdict would be

be very conciſe, that the qualities, in which women excel, tend to make them better in themſelves, and the talents, in which men are ſuperior, make them better, that is, more uſeful to the public; but, I being only a council, muſt not take on myſelf to act the judge; ſo for the preſent, the cauſe muſt remain undecided. And, were I authorized, ſtill, muſt there be a farther hearing; as men will not be wanting to reply, that the good qualities, which I attribute to women, are common to both ſexes. Granted; but, the qualities of men being likewiſe common to both ſexes, therefore, not to puzzle the queſtion, it will be neceſſary to ſpecify diſtinctly, on the ſide of each ſex, thoſe talents and qualities which are moſt common to it, and, in a high degree. I grant, that there are

men,

men, who are docile, candid, and modeſt; I add, that the bluſh, which is a good ſign in women, is ſtill better in men, being expreſſive, both of a quick ſenſe, and a good diſpoſition, as Barclay ſays, more than once, in his *Satyricon*, and the Barclay's Suffer-age, all literati will allow to be of weight; and though, I do not affirm the bluſh, to be an infallible ſign, yet, by what has come within the compaſs of my obſervation, little good is to be expected from an audacious boy.

In ſeveral individuals of our ſex, I repeat it, are ſeen though leſs fre-quently, the amiable qualities which ſhine in the other, but this by no means turns the ſcale in our favour, and is counterpoized, by many women being

eminent

eminent for thoſe endowments on which men value themſelves.

SECTION VI.

For eminence in political abilities, a thouſand princeſſes ſtand on record. Never will be forgotten the firſt woman, in whom hiſtory begins to diſperſe the obſcurity of fable, I mean Semiramis, who though in her infancy fed by pigeons, afterwards ſoared beyond the flight of eagles, cauſing not only her hereditary ſubjects left her by her huſband, to pay her an implicit obedience, but likewiſe reduced all the neighbouring nations to ſubjection, and even the moſt remote; extending her conqueſts to Ethopia on one ſide, and on the other to Judea. Nor Artemeſia, Queen of

Caria,

Caria, who not only preſerved the moſt affectionate attachment of that kingdom, during a long widowhood; but when attacked by the Rhodians, ſhe, by means of two very ſingular ſtratagems in two actions, cut off the enemies troops; and paſſing without delay from the defenſive to the offenſive part, ſoon made a conqueſt of that iſland, which a little before had attempted her dominions. Nor the two Aſpaſias, to whoſe admirable conduct, Paricles, the huſband of one, entirely committed the government of his dominions; and Cyrus, ſon of Darius Nothus, a gallant to the other, placed the like confidence in her abilities, and both to their great advantage. Nor the very prudent Phile, daughter to Antipater,

whom

whom he uſed to conſult, even when a girl, and who afterwards reſcued her ſpouſe, the raſh and giddy Demetrius, out of a thouſand difficulties. Neither the artful Livia, whoſe fineſſe, ſeems to have got the better of all Auguſtus's ſagacity; for had he known her, never would he have allowed her ſuch an aſcendency over him. Nor the contriving Agrippina, whoſe artifices proved ſo deſtructive, both to herſelf and the world, all her thoughts concentrating, without regard to means, in raiſing her ſon Nero to the throne. Neither the learned Amalaſunta, who not only underſtood the language of all the nations ſubject to the Roman Empire, but preſided over the ſtate, during the tempeſtuous minority of her ſon Athalric, with ſuch ſteadineſs and prudence.

Neither

Neither (paſſing over very many others, and drawing nearer to our own time) will ever be forgotten, Elizabeth, Queen of England, a woman, in whoſe compoſition, *the three graces and the three furies, had an equal hand*, and whoſe conduct as a ſovereign, would be the perpetual admiration of Europe, had not her vices perverted her abilities, and her political character been ſtained with the blood of the virtuous Mary, Queen of Scotland. Nor Catharine de Medicis, Queen of France *, whoſe ſagacity in negociations

*A French author, however, gives this ſhocking account of that political princeſs. "She ſeemed "formed to confound and deſtroy; her ſoul was "like a being infected in its very germ, that "grown

tions for maintaining the balance of the two clashing parties of the Catholics and Calvinists, and for preventing

" grown up, it becomes a scourge. A power " without commotions, would have had no re- " lish for her. Tempests were her element, and " she would have stirred up dissentions in the " most quiet and submissive court; but nothing " better unfolds the atrocity of her temper, than " her manner of training up her children. One " of their common recreations was cock-fight- " ing, bull-baiting, dogs and other animals " fighting against one another; and when there " was to be any uncommon execution, she car- " ried them thither; and to make them no less " libidinous than blood-thirsty, she, from time " to time, made little entertainments, where " her maids of honour, with their hair loose, and " chaplets of flowers on their heads, served at " table half naked. It was this same political " princess, who chiefly planned and conducted " the massacre of the Huguenots, commonly

" called

ing the downfal of the crown, brings to mind the dexterity of rope-dancers, who, by their ready management of the two oppoſite weights, keep themſelves ſafe in their apparent dangerous ſituation, to the no ſmall entertainment of the ſpectators. Eminent as the before mentioned princeſſes were, they would have been rivalled in the conduct of government by her Catholic

" called the maſſacre of Paris, though it was no " leſs horrible in ſeveral other cities of the king- " dom, particularly at Lions; and the common " executioner of that city, deſerves honourable " commemoration; for the governor ordering " him to go and diſpatch ſome who were in the " public priſons, he made anſwer, *that he never* " *did any buſineſs, but in due form of law.* Here, " adds the author, the man, of all others, the " vileſt by profeſſion, ſhews more honour than " a queen and all her council."

ſic Majeſty, Queen Iſabella, had ſhe been a ſovereign, as ſhe was a Queen. Inſtances however were not wanting, in which ſhe diſplayed a conſummate wiſdom. And Laurance Beyerlink ſays, in his panagyric on her, that there was nothing great done in her time, which was not in part or totally owing to her: *Quid magni in regno, ſine illa, imò niſi per illam ferè geſtum eſt?* The diſcovery of the new world, that event ſo glorious to Spain, would certainly never have been accompliſhed, had not Iſabella's magnanimity prevailed over Ferdinand's indolence and apprehenſions.

Laſtly, which is ſtill preferable, it appears to me, though I do not poſitively aſſert it, that, among the Queens

who enjoyed a long reign, moſt of them are celebrated in hiſtory, as excellent monarchs. But ſuch is the unhappineſs of poor women, that againſt ſo many illuſtrious examples, they are perpetually reproached with a Branehaut, a Fredegonde, the two Joannas of Naples, and a few others; though the two former were ſuperlatively wicked *, they were poſſeſſed of an uncommon capacity.

Nor

* Abbé Velly, in his hiſtory of France, gives a different account of this princeſs. Clotaire ordered Brumehaut to be brought to him, at the head of the army, where loading her with invective and accuſations, as indecent, as ill grounded, the ſoldiery tumultuouſly called out, ſhe deſerved to die; ſhe was accordingly tortured for three days, and walked upon a camel all about the camp, amidſt every inſult and indignity; then ſhe was tied to the tail of a horſe,

that

Nor is the notion ſo univerſal as is imagined, that the crown never ſits well on a female head; for Pliny tells us that in Meroe, an inland or peninſula, as the moderns will have it, formed by the Nile in Ethiopia, women

 have

that had never been broken, which dragged her over the flints, and amidſt the thorns and briers, and ſoon tore off her fleſh; the remainder of her body, was committed to the flames and burned to aſhes. Thus horribly died the conſort of the greateſt monarch, who, till that time, had reigned over France, the deſcendant, and mother of ſo many kings; that Queen, whom biſhop Fortunatus, makes the very picture of beauty, and the graces, whom Gregory of Tours ſets forth as the model of decorum and virtue, of diſcretion, and ſweetneſs of temper, and whom St. Gregory the Pope, repreſents as continually employing herſelf in the ſeveral duties of a pious Queen, a virtuous regent, and truly chriſtian mother.

have conſtantly ſwayed the ſceptre for many years. Farther, Cornelius a lapide, ſpeaking of the Queen of Sheba, who was one of them, is of opinion that her dominions extended a great way out of the circuit of Meroe, and might comprehend all Ethiopia, grounding himſelf on the words of our Saviour, who calls her *Queen of the South.* So that, as may be ſeen in Thomas Cornelio, a certain author affirms the iſland or peninſula of Meroe, to be larger than Great-Britain, and thus they were no petty Queens, even though their territories did not reach beyond Meroe. Ariſtotle lib. II. Polit. Cap. VII. ſays, that among the Lacedemonians, the women had a great ſhare in the affairs of government; and this, in conformity

to the laws left them by their wiſe legiſlator Lycurgus.

Likewiſe in Borneo, a large iſland in the Indian Sea, women, according to Mandeſlo's account in the ſecond volume of Olearius, hold the ſovereignty as a natural right, whilſt the grand prerogative of their huſbands is to fill the beſt employments under them. The inhabitants of the iſland of Formoſa, lying ſouth of China, have from experience, ſuch a high eſteem, both of the conduct and piety of women, that to them alone is committed the ſacordotal office, with every thing appertaining to religion, and even in politics, they are in ſome meaſure, equal to the ſovereign, their opinion being reverently deferred to,

as interpretors of the good pleaſure of their deities. All parts indeed, afford inſtances of the value placed on women, and the regard paid to female nature.

P. Beſſon in his *Syria Sancta*, ſays, that the Syrian women, from a principle of diſcretion, are very much inclined to ſilence, eſpecially in public, being in this reſpect, like the *Cigalas*, of which, only the male chirps. Another obſervation of his is, that the Kelbens, a ſect of chriſtians there, never eat of any female animal, though, whether this proceeds from reſpect, or averſion, may be a queſtion. Among fruits, the ſmall lemons, which are extremely ſour, are accounted males, the females, if Meſve's word may be taken, having

nothing

nothing of that ſtrong acidity. A law of the wiſe Solon, plainly ſhews, that among animals, the females were leſs miſchievous than the males, allowing five drachms to him who killed a wolf, and only one for taking a ſhe-wolf, as doing leſs harm. *Meurſius in Solone.* The Romans ſo far preferred the ladies to men, that the officers of their magiſtrates, who made every body clear the way for their more convenient paſſing along, durſt not require any ſuch thing of a woman; and when with their huſbands in a coach, theſe, ſays Feſtus, were, on their account, allowed to paſs by without alighting, which, otherwiſe, they would have been obliged to, as an eſtabliſhed mark of reſpect to magiſtracy. It might, therefore, be imagined, that

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it is only to ſtrength, men owe the ſuperiority we claim over the female ſex, which ſo generally yields to the other, either from prudence or other motives, that I lately read, in an account of *Guinea*, this droll obſervation, that it is an univerſal cuſtom among all the Parroots there, for the female, in honour to the male, to place him on the right ſide, ſhe, herſelf, ſtanding, as out of condeſcending reſpect, at the left. The Athenian philoſopher, Leontius, however, ſhewed at his death, that he had a greater value for his daughter Athanais, than for all his ſons, dividing his riches, which were very great, among them, and giving only a hundred crowns to her, for this reaſon, which afterwards appeared a kind of prophecy, that her

merit and fortune, would procure her a good ſettlement; and, in effect, the Empreſs Pulcheria, had ſuch an eſteem for her, as to marry her to her ſon Theodoſius the younger, by the name of Eudoxia.

The uſual practice of nations, is, however, more agreeable to reaſon, as correſpondent to the divine decree, ſignified to our primitive mother, in Paradiſe, when ſubjection to men was impoſed on her, and all her daughters in her name; only that refractory impatience with which people, often ſpurn at female government, when the public tranquility brings them under it, ſtands in need of an amendment, as likewiſe that prepoſterous conceit of our ſex, by which, a weak

child

child has been preferred for the ſovereignty to an adult woman, and the Perſians, carried this partiality to ſo ridiculous an exceſs, that the widow of one of their kings, being left pregnant, and the magi having, on a conſultation, given it as their opinion, that the embrio was a male, they placed a crown on the queen's belly, and proclaimed the fœtus king, giving him the name of *Sapor*, before he was born.

SECTION VII.

Thus far of political prudence, contenting ourſelves with a very few inſtances, though multipliable to numbers without end. It would be ſuperfluous to talk of domeſtic prudence, when we every day ſee houſes happy

and

and decent under the management of women, and thrown into ruin and diſorder by men.

Proceed we now to courage, a quality which men are pleaſed to look on as the peculiar characteriſtic, as peculiar of their ſex; and I will readily grant, that heaven has here given them the great portion, yet, not peculiar patrimony, from which the other ſex are totally excluded.

Not an age has paſſed in which many valiant women have not ſignalized themſelves; and, omitting the Heroines in ſcripture, and the female martyrs to the goſpel, as exploits in which the divine help intervened in an eſpecial manner, are not to be attributed

tributed to the ſex's proweſs. Numbers of women, eminent for fortitude and intrepidity, preſent themſelves in crowds to the memory. And with Semiramis, Artemiſia, Thomyris and Zenobia, no leſs may be paralleled Arataphila, ſpouſe to Nicoſtratus, governor of Cyrenia, in Lybia, who immortalized herſelf, by a very extraordinary aſſemblage of mental excellencies, the moſt tender concern for her country, the moſt daring valour, and the moſt inventive addreſs. Having in order to free her country from the ſavage tyranny of her huſband, and revenge his firſt wife, by whoſe clandeſtine death, he had made his way to her arms, put herſelf at the head of a conſpiracy, ſhe deprived Nicotratus, both of the kingdom, and life.

And Leander, brother to Nicoſtratus, having ſucceeded him, in his crown and beginning to imitate his cruelty, ſhe likewiſe, by joining addreſs to courage, rid her country of this ſecond tyrant, and at length, crowned her patriotiſm, by declining the ſovereignty, which, in gratitude to her great ſervices, performed with ſuch riſque, the Cyreneans had offered to her; Dripetina, daughter of the magnanimous Mithridates, and who could not be diverted from accompanying her father in all his dangerous expeditions, in the whole courſe of which, ſhe diſplayed that ſtrength of body and mind, which may ſeem to have been prognoſticated by the ſingularity of being born with two rows of teeth; and being, after her father's defeat, beſieged

by

by Manlias Riſcus, in a caſtle, which could not ſtand a long defence, ſhe choſe to deprive herſelf of life, rather than yield to the conſequences of captivity. Clelia, who, having fallen into the hands of Porſenna, king of the Tuſcans, found means by contrivance and labour, to break her priſon, and paſſing the Tiber on horſe-back, while others ſay, ſhe ſwam over, arrived ſafely at Rome. Arria, ſpouſe to Cecina Petus, who being engaged in Camillus's conſpiracy againſt the Emperor Claudius, determined not to ſurvive him, and being admitted to Cecina, exhorted him to prevent the ignominy of a public execution. She herſelf, ſet him the example, plunging a poniard into her breaſt. Anepponina, who, on account of her

huſband

huſband Julius Sabinus, having in goal, taken on himſelf the title of Cæſar, ſuſtained various tortures, rather than anſwer the captious queſtions put to her, and on Veſpaſian's order for putting her to death, ſhe, heroically told him, that ſhe preferred it to the vexation of ſeeing the throne poſſeſſed by one ſo very unworthy of it.

And, leaſt it be thought, the more modern ages do not afford more valiant women, *behold a maid of Orleans!* that pillar which ſupported the tottering monarchy of France in its extremity, contrary to all appearance and expectation; that the Engliſh imputed her exploits to infernal aſſiſtance, while the French extolled them as the conſequences of a divine

impulſe, for in that univerſal conſter-
nation of the ſoldiery and people, no-
thing could ſooner raiſe their deſpond-
ing minds, than working a perſua-
ſion that Heaven had declared itſelf
on their ſide. A valiant and ſpirited
country laſs was introduced to the
king, as the inſtrument whom hea-
ven, who ſeeth otherwiſe than man,
choſe for his deliverance a Margaret
of Denmark, who, in the 14th cen-
tury, conquered in perſon the kingdom
of Sweden, taking priſoner King
Albert himſelf, that the authors of
that age, called her the ſecond Semi-
ramis. Behold a Marulla, born at
Leon, an iſland in the Archipelago,
who, when the Turks were beſieging
the citadel of Cochin, ſeeing her fa-

ther

ther ſlain, ran and ſnatched up his ſword, brandiſhed it, and called to the garriſon to renew the action, and placing herſelf at the head of them, charged the enemy with ſuch impetuoſity, as not only to beat them back, but force the Paſcha Soliman to raiſe the ſiege: this valour, the Venetian governor recompenced with the choice of any officer in his whole army, and a ſuitable portion. Behold a *Blanca de Roſſi*, wife to Baptiſta Porta, the patron officer, who, after expoſing herſelf with the greateſt intrepedity, in the defence of the town of Baſſano, the place being ſoon taken by treachery and her huſband put to death, this lady, in the want of other means to withſtand his brutality, threw herſelf out of a window; but, after ſhe was

cured and recovered, poſſibly againſt her wiſh, the barbarian gratified his deſire, by the combined force of his ſlaves on which, ſhe put an end to her anguiſh, and vindicated her conjugal fidelity, depriving herſelf of life in her huſband's vault, which ſhe had cauſed to be opened for that purpoſe. Behold a *Bonna*, a poor country damſel in the Valteline, whom a Parmezan office of note, by name Pedro Brunoro, happened to alight on tending ſheep, and taken with her vivacity, made her his miſtreſs; but ſhe, by her amiable behaviour, ſoon made herſelf his wife, and continuing to accompany him as before, not only behaved on all occaſions with the precipitate intripidity of a common ſoldier, but acquired ſo complete a knowledge in the

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art of war, that ſeveral enterprizes were committed to her conduct. Behold *Amaria Pita*, that Galician heroine, who, when the Engliſh beſieged Corunna, in the year 1589, and had even made a lodgement in the breach, and the deſpairing garriſon were all for capitulating, this gallant woman, after reproaching our men in a paſſionate ſtile entirely ſuited to their capacity and profeſſion, ſnatching a ſword and target from a ſoldier, called out: *Let thoſe who have a ſpark of honour follow me.* She ardently flew towards the breach, and the ſoldiery catching the noble flame, ruſhed on the Engliſh, that after killing fifteen hundred of them, among whom was a brother of the lord Norris the commander of the land forces, obliged them to raiſe the ſiege.

For this act of proweſs, Philip II. rewarded Pita with the rank and pay of an enſign during life, and Philip III. ſettled the rank and pay of a reformed enſign on her deſcendants. Behold a Maria de Eſtrade, the wife of Pedro Sanchez Farſan, a ſoldier of Cortez's, who well deſerves to be honourably mentioned for her many and very extraordinary exploits, of which, Father de Torquemada, gives ſuch a particular relation in his firſt volume of the *Indian Monarchy*; ſpeaking of the deplorable Sally, which Cortez made out of Mexico, after the death of Montezuma, he ſays of her: *In this bloody action, Maria de Eſtrada, eminently ſignalized her courage, performing wonders with her ſword and target, and bearing down the enemies ranks, as*

if

if ſhe had been one of the braveſt and ſtrongeſt men in the world; forgetful as it were, of her ſex, and putting on all the valour, which, only men of the greateſt honour, diſplay on ſuch trying occaſions; and the wonders ſhe performed were ſuch as ſtruck the enemy with much terror, as they raiſed admiration in the Spaniards. And when, in the next chapter, he gives an account of the battle, fought between the Spaniards and Mexicans, in the valley of Otumba, he revives the memory of this illuſtrious woman, in the following words. In this battle, Maria de Eſtrada, *ſhewed herſelf equal to the reputation ſhe had acquired at Mexico,* charging on horſeback, with a courage, not inferior to any in the whole army, and the ardour of a young warrior,

rior, eager in the purſuit of preferment or glory. Behold an Anne de Brux, a Fleming Virago, born in a village near Liſle, who, purely to preſerve her honour from the inſults of the ſoldiery, entered into the army, where ſhe ſerved a conſiderable time, and diſtinguiſhed herſelf in many warm actions, that ſhe came to be a lieutenant, and when being afterwards taken priſoner by the French, ſhe diſcovered her ſex, the Marſhal de Senetterrè offered her a company in the French ſervice, which ſhe declined, rather than ſerve againſt her natural ſovereign; and having obtained her diſcharge, ſhe returned home, and ended her days in the tranquility of a convent.

My

My having hitherto omitted the Amazons, in whom this ſubject is ſo much intereſted, was with a view to ſpeak of them ſeparately. Some authors, indeed, deny the very exiſtence of ſuch females, contrary to many more, who are poſitive in the reality of it. All we can grant, is, that the real hiſtory of the Amazons, has been adulterated with a groſs mixture of fable, as their killing all their male children, living totally ſeparate from the other ſex, and going to them once a year, for the ſake of propagation. And in the ſame mint I imagine to have been coined their encounters, with Hercules and Theſeus, Penthefadlei, going to the aſſiſtance of diſtreſſed Troy, as likewiſe, perhaps, their

Queen

Queen Thaleſtris's viſit to Alexander; yet, I think it preſumptuous, to deny that there was in Aſia, a formidable tribe of martial women, called by the name of Amazons, when the truth of it is atteſted by ſo many reputable and ancient writers. And even, if this be denied, and we are deprived of our Aſiatic Amazons, yet is not the glory of women eclipſed? The other three parts of the World, America, Africa, and Europe, afford other Amazons. In America, they were ſeen by the Spaniards, marching, armed along the greateſt river in the World, the Maranon; and, on account of that ſingular phenomenon, they gave it the name, which it retains to this day; *the River of the Amazons.* A province of the empire of Monomotapa,

motapa in Africa is chiefly inhabited by ſuch females, and they are ſaid to be the beſt ſoldiers that prince has in all his various dominions; though a certain geographer of repute, makes the country inhabited by theſe war-like women, to be a diſtinct ſtate.

If Europe affords no country with a military corps compoſed of females, yet they, who on ſome occaſion or other, have formed themſelves into a body, and defeated the enemies of their country, may be entitled to the name of Amazons. Such were the women of Beauvais, in France, who, on the day appointed for an aſſault, when that city was beſieged by the Burgundians, in the year 1472, putting themſelves under the command

mand of Joan Hatchet, attacked and beat off the enemy. Hatchet, herſelf, having thrown down from the wall a daring officer, who firſt fixed the colours on it. Her ſucceſsful courage, is to this day, commemorated in that city, by a yearly feſtival, the women in the proceſſion, taking place of the men. Such were the female inhabitants of the Grecian iſlands famous for the victory of Lepanto, as fought in an adjacent ſea. The year before, the Turks having attacked the principal Iſland, the Venetian governor and the far greater part of the men, were ſeized with ſuch a pannic, that in the night time, they withdrew out of the iſland. The women remaining, being animated by a prieſt named Antonio Roſoneo to defend the place, they effectually complied with

his

his exhortations, to the great honour of their ſex, and the no leſs diſgrace of ours.

The women, who put an end to life, by their own hands, are by no means adduced as examples of virtue, *but of a faulty exceſs of bravery*, which is ſufficient for our purpoſe.

SECTION VIII.

Concerning magnanimous women, I muſt not omit a point on which men ſport their wit, as that in which the weakneſs of women, moſtly betrays itſelf: the keeping of ſecrets. Cato the cenſor, thought ſo hardly of them in this reſpect, that for a man to truſt a ſecret to any woman whatſoever, was one of the greateſt weakneſſes

neſſes, that could be committed; but this was diſproved by Porcia, daughter to Cato the younger, and wife to Marcus Brutus, who prevailed on her huſband not to conceal from her, the great ſecret of the conſpiracy againſt Cæſar, having as a proof of her fortitude and ſecrecy, given herſelf a ſevere wound in the thigh, and bearing all the anguiſh of it, without making it known to him or any one elſe.

Pliny ſays, on the credit of the Magi, that the heart of a certain bird, being applied to a woman when ſleeping, cauſes her to diſcloſe all her ſecrets. And in another part, he ſays the ſame thing of the tongue of a certain inſect. One would not think that women were ſo prone to diſcloſe

their

their mind, when magic ranſacks the ſecrets of nature, to find keys for opening the outlets of their hearts. But we, no leſs than Pliny himſelf, laugh at thoſe inventions; and allow that there are very few women capable of keeping a ſecret, but the moſt experienced politicians, will in return, allow that to be a weakneſs not at all peculiar to the ſex, but, that a man is ſcarce to be found who may ſafely be truſted with a ſecret of importance, when any thing is to be got by making it known. Indeed, were not theſe gems very ſcarce, princes would not put ſo high a value on them.

Inſtances, however, are not wanting of women who have kept ſecrets

with

with invincible firmneſs. Pythagoras, in his laſt hours, delivered all his writings which contained the moſt abſtruſe myſteries of his philoſophy to his daughter Damo, charging her never to make them public, which ſhe ſo faithfully obeyed, that even when reduced to great poverty, and ſhe might have ſold theſe books for a conſiderable ſum, ſhe choſe rather to perſevere in obeying her father, than free herſelf from the diſtreſſes of poverty.

The reſolute Arætaphila, of whom mention has been made above, intending to take away her huſband, Nicoſtratus's life, by a poiſonous draught, rather than attempt it by forming a conſpiracy, was ſurpriſed

in

in the preparation of it, and being put to the torture, to make known the whole ſecret, ſo far was the pain from depriving her of the government of her heart, and the uſe of her reaſon, that, inſtead of making known her intention, ſhe artfully brought the tyrant to believe that the portion was a philtre for increaſing his paſſion towards her; and this ingenious fiction, proved a real philtre, Nicoſtratus loving her more than he had before, imagining, that her endeavour to excite a ſupernatural love in him, muſt be the effect of ſome ſuch paſſion in herſelf.

In the conſpiracy, formed by Ariſtogiton, againſt Hippias the tyrant of Athens, a court lady, who knew

the accomplices was put to the torture, but to convince the tyrant, that the ſecret was not to be extorted from her, bit out her tongue in his preſence.

In Piſo's conſpiracy againſt Nero, ſeveral of the principal perſonages of Rome, were, at the firſt appearance of the torture, terrified into a confeſſion, that Lucan himſelf, ſo ſpirited in his poeſy, charged his own mother, and others their moſt intimate friends, as accomplices; yet could neither ſcourge, nor fire, nor other ſufferings, force the leaſt diſcovery from Epicharis a common woman, who was privy to the whole affair.

And I myſelf, knew a woman, who being examined on the rack, concern-

ing

ing a very atrocious crime, committed by her maſters, outſtood that excruciating trial, and only to ſave her maſters, not herſelf; for what little ſhare ſhe had in the guilt, was from ignorance, and by order and other circumſtances, as could not, with the leaſt colour of equity, have ſubjected her to any ſuch puniſhment. But there would be no end of enumerating inſtances of women, from whom engines could not extort a ſecret; yet, I have heard a perſon, who had been preſent at many ſuch procedures, ſay, that he has known a great many to confeſs, when they came to be ſtripped in order for execution, but very few, who, after going through this outrage to their modeſty, were ever brought to a compliance by the ſcourge. Can

we forbear admiring that ſex, on which, amidſt all its tender ſenſibility, a regard to modeſty, has a greater effect, than all the ſtrength of an executioner*.

Some

* I ſhall add one inſtance of female magnanimity, which cannot but affect all who have any ſenſibility. Henry IV. of France, had beſieged the town of Falaiſe, and preparations were making for ſtorming it, when a young tradeſman, by name la Chenaye, who was in love with, and equally loved by a girl ſuitable to him, propoſed to her a way which he was contriving, for getting out of town, and thus putting her in ſafety: as I am perſuaded, anſwered ſhe, that it is only from a concern for me, that you can think of forſaking your countrymen now that they are going to fight, your propoſal does not leſſen either my love or my eſteem for you; and as a proof of it, I am ready to unite my deſtiny to yours, come, I will inſtantly give you

my

Some perſons, I make no doubt, will charge this parallel, between women and men, with flattery; but I refer them to Seneca, whoſe ſtoiciſm, ſo far from flattering, ſpared no perſon; yet, he puts women abſolutely on a level with men, for any valuable talents and qualities His words are

 theſe:

my hand, but it ſhall be upon the breach. At theſe words, ſhe haſtily moved forward without regarding the tears or intreaties of her lover: *Both*, ſays Mezeray, *fought with ſuch ſignal courage, that Henry IV. who always loved valour, though in an enemy, ordered, by all means poſſible to ſave their lives; but La Chenaye, being killed by a muſket ſhot, his miſtreſs refuſed quarters, and continued fighting, till feeling herſelf mortally wounded, ſhe threw herſelf on her lover's body, mixing her blood with his, and embracing him as ſhe expired.*

theſe: *Quis autem dicat naturam maliquè cum muliebribus ingeniis egiſſe, & virtutes illarum in arctum retraxiſſe? Par illis, mihi crede, vigor, par ad honeſta (libeat) facultas eſt. Laborem, doloremque ex æquo ſi conſuevere patiuntur.* in Conſol. ad Marciam. Who will ſay that nature has not dealt kindly with women, beſtowing on them, but a very ſlender ſhare of virtue. No; they have an equal ſtrength of mind, equal diſpoſition and ability for virtue and decorous actions; and with a little uſe, bear toil and pain, as well as we. Conſolatory Lr. to Marcia.

SECTION IX.

Let us now come to the grand battery againſt female intellects, in which I own

I own, that if reaſon does not ſupport me, I have little to expect from authority; for writers on this ſubject, ſcarce any excepted, are ſo wedded to the common opinion, that they, one and all, make little account of female intellects. I may, indeed, offer as a reply to moſt of thoſe books, the fable which Carducio of Scicily, mentions to another purpoſe, in his *dialogues on painting*. A man and a lion, travelling together, they fell into a diſpute who were braveſt, men or lions, each cried up his own kind, till coming to a fountain adorned with very beautiful ſculptures, the man took notice, that on the top of it, was repreſented a man rending the jaws of a lion: Now, ſays he, turning to his adverſary, you will no longer pretend

to talk of lions being as brave as men, only look there, ſee what becomes of your fellow brute. A fine argument indeed, anſwered the lion, grimly ſmiling: that figure was made by a man, and ſo no wonder, he has given man the better in the ſtruggle; but, take my word for it, that had a lion been the artiſt, he would have altered their poſition, and have given the man for a good meal to the lion.

Lucretia Marinella, a learned Venetian Lady, among other works, wrote a book intitled, *the Excellency of Women, in compariſon of the Faults and Vices of Men.* The judicious Juan de Cartaegena, ſays, that he ſaw and read that book, with great pleaſure, at Rome; and I have alſo ſeen it in

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the king's library, at Madrid. What is certain herein, is, that neither ſhe, nor me, can be judges in this cauſe, being parties; ſo that the queſtion muſt be referred to the angels, who being of no ſex, are neutral.

And firſt, they who vilify the underſtanding of women, ſo as to make it only mere inſtinct, are unworthy of being admitted to the diſpute; and ſuch are they, who dare affirm as a maxim, that the very top of female capacity, is to govern a hen-rooſt.

Such was that prelate, cited by Don Franciſco Manuel, in his *guide to married women*, who ſays, that the moſt knowing woman, knew how to lay in order a cheſt of clean linen,

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The author of ſuch a ſpeech, might be reſpectable on other accounts, but ſuch ſayings, do him little honour; for, in the very ſofteſt conſtruction, they can be allowed to be no better than jocular hyperboles. That women are capable of preſiding over religious communities, is manifeſt from numberleſs inſtances; and that our times afford women equal to the government of ſtates, we have an illuſtrious inſtance in the preſent Czarina of Muſcovy.

To talk thus contemptuouſly of women, denotes a ſuperficial man. Seeing female knowledge to be in general limited to thoſe domeſtic employments in which they have been trained up; they from thence infer

(though

(though without knowing, that they do infer, as being unacquainted with reflection) that they are not capable of any thing farther; whereas, every ſmatterer in logick, knows, that the abſence of the act does not imply the abſence of the power; and thus, if women do not know more, is no concluſive argument, againſt their having a talent for greater employments.

No man knows more than what he has ſtudied or applied himſelf to, yet to infer that his capacity cannot reach beyond what he has made the ſubject of his application, would be equally illogicale and ill-natured. Were all men, as the celebrated Sir Thomas More repreſents them in his Utopia, ſo to give themſelves up to agriculture,

as

as to be ignorant of every thing elſe, would that warrant an aſſertion, that men are incapable of any thing elſe? Among the Druſi, a people of Paleſtine, women are the only depoſitaries of learning; reading and writing, being almoſt univerſal among them, and all the literature in that nation, be it much or little, is treaſured up in the intellects of women, and totally unknown to men, who, on their part, mind only agriculture, war and trade. Did ſuch a cuſtom prevail all over the world, the women would, unqueſtionably, look upon men to labour under a natural incapacity for learning, as men now entertain the ſame idea of women; but ſuch a judgment would be very wrong and injurious, ſo that, which at preſent prevails

among

among men to the diſparagement of women, may be ſaid to deſerve no better predicament.

SECTION X.

And perhaps, it is from the ſame principle, though with ſomething more courteſy and regard to women, that, Father Malebranche, in his *enquiry after truth*, gives them the preference to men, in the diſcernment of ſenſible things; at the ſame time, placing them far below us, for abſtract ideas. For though, he accounts for this from the ſoftneſs of the brain; theſe phyſical cauſes, it is well known, every one inveſtigates them in his own way, after experience has aſſured him of the

effects,

effects, or he conceives himſelf aſſured. And this very author falls into that intellectual defect, of which he himſelf ſets up to cure all mankind; that is, the error ariſing from common prejudices, and ill-digeſted principles, as unqueſtionably, he pronounced this judgment, either being carried away by the common current, or as having obſerved, that women of character for good ſenſe, reaſoned more happily and more to the point, than men, as to ſenſitive things, and as ſhallowly and abſurdly in abſtracts; but let not this be attributed to any diſparity of talent, when it is, in a great meaſure, owing to the difference of application and practice. Women being much more employed in cookery, and the embelliſhments of dreſs than men,

their

their thoughts, conſequently run more on things of that nature, and thus they talk of them with more judgment and fluency, whereas, ſcarce one woman of a thouſand, exerciſes her faculties on problems, or abſtract ideas, and thus it is nothing ſtrange, that they ſhould acquit themſelves but aukwardly in converſations on thoſe points. Be it further obſerved, that women, whoſe contemplative turn of mind delights in reaſoning on the refinements of platonic love, where this happens to come on the carpet, will eclipſe a man of the greateſt parts, who has not thought it worth his while to reflect on theſe chimeras.

A perſon, whatever be his natural capacity, will, generally ſpeaking, appear

pear but ignorant or ſhort ſighted, in matters foreign from his ſtation, or on which he has not beſtowed any attention. A ploughman, though naturally ſagacious and witty, which ſometimes is the caſe, if he has never thought of any thing but his tillage, muſt, whenever ſtate affairs come to be talked of, make but a poor figure, in compariſon of a mere ſmatterer in politics, and ſhould the moſt conſummate politician, if only a politician, take on him to talk of drawing up armies, and conducting ſieges, he would ſay a thouſand abſurdities, that an officer, underſtanding his trade, will wonder at his impertinence, as Hanibal laughed at that great Aſiatic orator, who preſumed to harangue on

military

military things, before him and king Antiochus.

The caſe in queſtion, is the very ſame; a woman of very clear intellects, has her thoughts taken up all day, about her domeſtic concerns, without hearing any diſcourſe of a ſuperior nature, or, if any edifying ſubject is introduced, hears it only ſuperficially. Her huſband, though greatly her inferior in natural endowments, is often in company with learned eccleſiaſtics, or expert politicians, in whoſe converſation, he acquires variety of knowledge, becomes acquainted with the courſe and conduct of public affairs, and of many other important particulars. If he happens to be talking before his wife, of theſe ſub-

jects, with which he has thus picked up ſome ſhallow acquaintance, and ſhe ſays what comes into her mind, yet, her natural judgment being totally uninformed, what ſhe ſays will almoſt neceſſarily be faulty, that her huſband, and even others, who may happen to hear her, will think her an empty creature, hugging themſelves with their knowledge, for which, however, they may thank good company.

This woman's caſe, is that of numberleſs others, who, though of much better parts than ſupercilious men, are ridiculed as incapable of talking on any ſolid or literary ſubjects. Our ſilence, or our talking amiſs depends not ſo much on the want of talents,

as

as on the want of information and knowledge, without which, the very intellects of an angel, muſt labour under a deficiency; whilſt men, though of an inferior capacity, ſhall inſult over women, as evidently their ſuperiors, though their ſuperiority be all adventitious, gotten from books and converſation.

Another advantage of information is, that men are accuſtomed to think, argue, and talk on ſuch ſubjects, as belonging to their ſphere, or coming in their way; but to women, as *terra incognita*, things on which they very rarely think, nay, ſcarce can think, that when the converſation turns on ſuch points, men may be ſaid to talk premeditately, and women quite ex-

 temporarily,

extemporarily, an advantage, which needs not be enlarged on. Laſtly, men, by a mutual communication of their thoughts on ſuch ſubjects, become partakers of each others lights, that in their converſations, beſides their own reaſon, they make uſe of what they have collected from others, that ſometimes an individual, ſhall in an argument utter the emanations of many underſtandings. But the converſations of women, inſtead of ſuch ſublime ſubjects, turning, and that at beſt, only on their works, and other houſehold affairs, they impart no inſtruction to one another; that when called on to talk of the above ſubjects, it is of a ſudden, and without any previous information, having never come in their way.

Theſe

Theſe advantages, by which a man of very dull parts talks both more fluently and judiciouſly on deviſed ſubjects than a woman of exceeding good ſenſe, are of ſuch weight, that in a diſpute between the former and the other, he, at leaſt among the ſuperficial generation, ſhall paſs for a man of very profound knowledge, and ſhe be looked on as a ſimple creature.

For want of ſuch reflections, it is that ſo many men, otherwiſe learned and ſenſible, entertain ſuch contemptuous notions of the underſtanding of women; and the cream of the jeſt is, that they have been crying out ſo long, about womens being ſuch giddy, ſhort

ſighted creatures, that many of the ſex, have been brought to entertain ſuch mean thoughts of themſelves.

SECTION XI.

And even they, who, more agreeable to reaſon, as with a leſs exceſſive difference from the advantage, in underſtanding to be on men's ſide, vouchſafing to allow, that, here and there, ſuch a thing as a woman of ſolid ſenſe and underſtanding is to be found. I ſay, that in my opinion, even they would not have maintained this inequality between the two ſexes, had they attended to the before-mentioned circumſtances, by which wo-

men,

men, though of better parts, appear much inferior in colloquy.

Nor do I know any ground for this pretended inequality beyond that which I have mentioned, and the uncertainty of which I have laid open, for if I am told that it is demonſtrated by experience, ſuch experience I affirm to be deluſory, and have proved its falſity in many articles. I ſhall farther, relatively to experience, adduce two eminent witneſſes in behalf of women; the firſt, is that admirable Portugueſe writer, Don Franciſco, Emanual *in his guide to married men.*

Every circumſtance that can be deſired, concurs to give this gentleman's

ſuffrage, a diſtinguiſhed regard in the preſent debate; for beſides his natural talents, he viſited many countries, was engaged in variety of affairs, and his genius being mixed with much feſtivity and politeneſs, he every where, as his writings plainly ſhew, inſinuated himſelf among the ladies. Now, this author, not ſatisfied with putting women on a level with men for intellects, rather allows them to be our ſuperiors. For, in leaf 73 of the ſaid book, after expatiating on the charge of imbecility againſt women, ſays, *I am of a very different opinion, and have all the reaſon in the world to believe, that there are many of very great parts; nay, I have ſeen and converſed with ſuch in Spain, and other countries; and for that very reaſon, I think the quickneſs*

of

of diſcernment, acuteneſs, and reaſoning, in which they ſurpaſs us, ought to be tempered with great circumſpection; and a little lower, *as we cannot deprive women* of that *vivacity of underſtanding, with which nature hath formed them, we may at leaſt keep them from the opportunities of ſharpening it to their own danger, and our damage.* The teſtimony of this author, as I have ſaid, is of great weight, as beſides his experience and capacity, he adds, that in the above compoſition, he has been far from favouring the women; and at the cloſe of it, roundly charges himſelf with having been ſomething too ſevere.

The ſecond witneſs, is the very learned Abbe de Bellegarde, likewiſe a courtier,

a courtier, and who acted his part on that celebrated theatre of the world, Paris. This author, in a book of his, intitled, *Curious Letters on Literature, and morality*, affirms the mind of women to be in no wise inferior to that of men for any science, art, or employment. I cannot say, I ever read this performance, but find it quoted on this head, in the *Journal de Trevoux*, for April 1702. The author of a *Journey in the Stage Coach, from Madrid to Alcala*, (who, whoever he be, has a masterly pen) is of the same opinion. Father Buffier, a celebrated French writer, enters into a formal proof of it, in his *Examen des Prejuges Vulgaires*.

SECTION.

SECTION XII.

Therefore, laying aſide the ſo much boaſted manifeſtation of experience, all that remains in proof of this ſuppoſed diſparity of intellects, is, ſome phyſical reaſon; but I affirm, there is none, as it muſt reſide either in an *entitative* diſparity of ſouls, or a different organization, or different temperature in the bodies of both ſexes.

The entitative inequality of ſouls I paſs over, it being the common opinion of philoſophers, that all rational ſouls are equal as to phyſical perfection; though, in behalf of the oppoſite opinion, St. Auſtin, Lib. XV. de Trinitate, Cap. XIII; is quoted, but after

after a careful perusal of that chapter, I do not find, that it says a word about the matter. I likewise am not ignorant, that the faculty of Paris condemned a proposition, affirming that *the soul of Christ, our Lord and Saviour, was not* more *perfect, than the soul of the traitor Judas*, to which Mastrio, the noble Scotist answers, that such condemnation not having been confirmed by the apostolic see, does not bind us, and so it is. But, at the same time, I take on me to say, that such a proposition, in whatever book it be found, should be expunged as offensive, with regard to the illiterate, and as not clearly distinguishing in souls, the physical from the moral part. But this does not in any manner

affect

affect the truth of the common opinion for the entire phyſical equality of ſouls.

But, ſuppoſing ſouls to be eſſentially unequal, how will they prove, or make us believe, that God ſelected the beſt for men, and left the leſs perfect for women? It becomes us rather to believe, thar the ſoul of the bleſſed Virgin, would in ſuch a caſe, be better than that of any other mere creature; as the reſpectable Suarez affirms, that, even in the phyſical part, it was abſolutely perfect; ſo that thoſe women, who ſay that the ſoul is neither male nor female, may ſtick to their text, it is ſound doctrine.

As to organization, I readily believe, that its difference may induce a great

difference

difference in the operations of the ſoul; though, what organization is beſt adapted to the intellects, we know not. Ariſtotle advances, that people of a ſmall head, are generally the moſt ſenſible. Before he committed this to paper, I am apt to think he took meaſure of his own. Others give it in favour of large heads. Theſe may be concluded to have had none of the ſmalleſt heads, otherwiſe they would have ſided with Ariſtotle. Cardinal Spondati, in his courſe of philoſophy, ſays, that in Cardinal de Richlieu, the organs appertaining to mental operations, were double; and to that, he attributes the ſingular abilities of that miniſter. This duplication I underſtand, not with relation to number, that would be a prodigy, but to ſize

and

and magnitude. And this is agreeable to an opinion of many, that the greater the quantity of the brain, the greater ſhare of reaſon; which they infer from the obſervation that man has, in proportion, more brain than any other animal. Others, (as Martinez, in his anatomy) ſetting aſide both great and little heads, will have the middling to be beſt adapted to the intellects. With ſubmiſſion to thoſe who, in forming an eſtimate of the worth of ſouls, take meaſure of the parts of the body, all who walk with their eyes open, know, that among the large headed men, there are both wits and oafs; and the like may be ſaid of men with little heads. Did the different ſize of the head, or quantity of the brain, cauſe any diſparity in the operations of the

underſtanding,

underſtanding, men of different ſtatures, would be found as different in their underſtanding and perception, both the ſkull and the brain being greater or leſs, according to the ſtature; whereas all the world knows the contrary.

Therefore, ſhould Pliny have truth on his ſide, when he ſays that the ſubſtance of the brain in men is conſiderably larger than in women, (in which, however, I beg leave to ſuſpend my judgment, till I conſult ſome expert anatomiſt) this proves nothing: for, if the pre-eminence of underſtanding depends on this conſiderable exceſs of brain, ſuch a man as Cervantes, or Quevedo, muſt have had forty or fifty times more brain than our town fool.

fool. And large bodied men muſt, in general, be more ingenious, and fitter for affairs of conſequence, than thoſe whom they can look over, as having more brain. The writer of this would be very much obliged to them, could they perſuade him of any ſuch thing, he having his ſhare both of height and bulk.

I ſubſcribe indeed to the opinion, that the ſtrength, or weakneſs of the mental powers depends in a great meaſure, on different organization, but does not ariſe from any ſenſible difference of organization in the greater parts. It is from the inſenſible difference of the moſt minute, as the different texture or firmneſs of the ſubtile fibres, and the greater or leſs cavity,

cleanlineſs, and tenueity of thoſe fine ducts, through which the ſpirits take their courſe; and of this we can know nothing, whether it be different in men or women; as beyond the ken of human ſight. Neither the anatomiſt nor cartheſian, with their beſt microſcopes, can diſcern whether the pineal gland, to which they limit the ſoul's reſidence, be of a different texture in women, from what it is in men.

That it is not any ſenſible difference in organization, which cauſes a difference in the rational operations, at leaſt, if not of a monſtrous irregularity, is evident from men of different ſhapes being equally rational; and in men organized alike in form and appearance, there ſhall be a very great

difference

difference in the faculties of their minds. Æſop the fabuliſt, was from head to foot, ſo miſhapen, as ſcarce to make the appearance of a man; and his name has always continued to be uſed as the antonomaſia of deformity and uglineſs; yet, his genius has continued the admiration of all ages. Socrates was not many degrees above Æſop for comelineſs of form and features, yet, does not all antiquity afford a finer genius. But granting that a different ſenſible organization implies different mental powers, what can be inferred from thence? Nothing: women being of a different formation from men only in thoſe organs which nature has appointed for propagation, and not at all in thoſe appertaining to reaſon.

SECTION XIII.

As little can this ſuppoſed inferiority of female intellects be grounded on the difference of conſtitution or temperature, not that I deny the temperature to have a conſiderable influence on the right or wrong uſe of the mental powers. I am rather perſuaded that a difference of temperature, cauſes a greater difference in the operations, than a different organization; for every one muſt have experienced that according to the variations in his conſtitution, without any diſorder in the organization, he is, more or leſs, fit for operations of any kind, and there is ſcarce a diſtemperature affecting the body,

which does not at the ſame time, more or leſs, impede the functions of the ſoul. But the kind of conſtitution or temperature, moſt favourable to the exertion of the intellects, is not eaſily aſcertained.

If Ariſtotle's opinion is to be followed, the female temperament muſt be allowed moſt adapted to this effect. This philoſopher, who derives all the various phenomena from his four primary qualities, ſays, Sec. 14. *of his problems. queſt.* 15. that men of a cold temperature, have more ſenſe and diſcernment than thoſe of a warmer conſtitution, though in the beginning of that ſame problem, he ſuppoſes the inhabitants of warm climates, to be more ingenious than thoſe of the

cold (which I do not believe, as then the natives of Africa, would be more ingenious than the Engliſh and Dutch) for conformably to his opinion of the intenſeneſs of his primary qualities he affirms from the force of the *Antiperiſtaſis*, that men are of the hotteſt conſtitution in the coldeſt countries, and the coldeſt in the hotteſt. *Et enim, qui ſedes frigidas habent, frigore loci obſiſtente, longe calidiores, quam ſua ſint natura, redduntur**. And ſo far below thoſe of a colder conſtitution, does he place in point of reaſon, thoſe of a very hot conſtitution, as to compare them with perſons in a ſtate of ebriety. *Itaque vinolentis admodum ſimiles eſſe videntur*,

* In the inhabitants of a cold country, the renitency of the cold increaſes their natural heat.

dentur, nec ingenio valent quo proſpiciant, rerumque rationes inquirant *. The philoſopher, in claſſing the aduſt with the dull little thought of his diſciple Alexander, or rather did it by way of reſentment, for it is certain, he wrote moſt of his works, after Alexander had diſmiſſed him on ſtrong ſuſpicions of treachery. And when retired to Athens, he had the freſh mortification of that prince's ſending a preſent of thirty talents of gold to his ſchool-fellow and competitor Zenocrates, without the leaſt mention of Ariſtotle; though, whether his reſentment roſe ſo high, that he ſhould

* They ſeem ſo many drunkards, quite incapable of forecaſt, or examining the reaſons of things.

have engaged in a conſpiracy with Antipater againſt Alexander's life, and propoſed the manner of taking him off by poiſon, is to be queſtioned: But to the point.

The ſame Ariſtotle teaches, and all naturaliſts and phyſicians agree, that the difference of the temperament in the two ſexes, is, in man hot and dry, in women cold and moiſt. *Eſt autem vir calidus et ſiccus, muler frigida, humidaque* (Sect. V. Queſt. 26.) thus a cold conſtitution being, in Ariſtotle's opinion, moſt favourable to the intellect, and of courſe, a hot temperament being the reverſe, women muſt naturally ſurpaſs men in the uſe of the intellectual powers.

This

This argument is concluſive to thoſe who acquieſce in Ariſtotle's *ipſe dixit*; but, for my part, I proteſt it is of no weight with me, for I neither believe that hot countries afford keener wits than the cold, nor that men of a cold conſtitution are more ingenious than the hot, and much leſs that thoſe of an aduſt conſtitution, border on frenzy; and as to the ſuppoſed force of the *Antiperiſtaſis*; it ſtill may remain a doubt. Moiſture and ſiceity, are the other two qualities of the two temperaments. With regard to theſe, women, according to Ariſtotle's doctrine, may be concluded more ſagacious than men. They who affirm a greater quantity of brain to imply a ſuperiority of underſtanding, ground themſelves

ſelves on man, the moſt ſenſible of all creatures, having more brain in proportion, than all other. Now, firſt, Ariſtotle ſays that man is of a more moiſt conſtitution than all other animals. *Homo omnium animantium maximé humidus natura eſt.* (Sect. V. Queſt. 7.) and as from man's having more brains than the brutes, it is inferred, that the greater the brain, the greater ſhare of ſenſe and reaſon, and from man's being of a moiſter conſtitution than the brutes, the inference is that underſtanding always bears a proportion to moiſture, then, the female temperament being more moiſt than that of man, women muſt be the more intelligent of the two.

This argument, unleſs by way of retort to thoſe of the oppoſite ſide, as little proves the principles in which they jar, being when rightly conſidered, very uncertain. Who told Pliny of man's having a greater quantity of brains than all other animals? Had he an aſſiſtant of ſuch patience, as to lay open the ſkulls of all kinds of animals, and then weigh the difference of their brains? and how came Ariſtotle to know that man has more moiſture in him than any brute? Shall we ſuppoſe this indefatigable philoſopher, to have ſqueezed them all in preſſes, the better to come at the quantity of moiſture? It rather appears that ſeveral domeſtic animals, moſt inſects, and almoſt all fiſhes are more moiſt

than

than man. And were it true that the human brain exceeds that of all others, can it be inferred, that in our ſpecies, the greater the brain, the more comprehenſive and perſpicuous the underſtanding: for in many other parts of the body, man differs from the brute, yet, the exceſs of ſome individuals in thoſe parts, does not ſeem productive of a diſtinguiſhing influence on the mental powers. In order to this, it would be neceſſary to have obſerved that, among brutes of the ſame kind, thoſe who are beſt furniſhed with brains, have the beſt inſtinct, which I believe not to be the caſe; as thus in a total want of brain, there would be a total want of perception, which is falſe, for, according to Pliny, there are many animals,

which

which have neither blood nor brain, and yet have their inſtinct.

SECTION XIV.

Therefore, laying aſide theſe proofs, drawn from Ariſtotle's doctrines, which are either falſe or uncertain, and can only ſerve women to ſtop the mouths of Ariſtotle's barkers to whom, it is enough that he has ſaid ſo; let us proceed to examine whether woman's being of a more moiſt conſtitution than man, be any detriment to her underſtanding. The handle which they take hold of, who are for proving the inferiority of woman's intellects from ſome phyſical reaſon, and it is not without an air of probability,

probability, is that exceſs of moiſture, either of itſelf, or by the vapours exhaled from it, may obſtruct the courſe of the animal ſpirits, clogging up of the fine ducts, through which thoſe minute corpuſcles circulate.

This argument however is manifeſtly falſe, otherwiſe it would prove not that the underſtanding of women is leſs penetrative and profound, but that their reaſon is more ſlow in its operations, whereas many men, readily allow them the advantage in quickneſs and facility.

Farther, men, otherwiſe quick-witted, acute, and profound, are ſubject to conſtitutional catarrous fluxions, proceeding from excrementitious humours

mours gathered about the meninges*, and apparently of the ſame ſubſtance with the brain, as may be ſeen in Riberia, Chap de Catorro. Thus the exceſſive moiſture of the brain does not obſtruct the ready or right uſe of reaſon, and if the excrementitious has no ſuch bad effect, much leſs is it to be ſuppoſed of the natural.

And the natural does not for Pliny informs us, that the brain of man is moiſter than that of any other animal, *Sed homo portione maximum, at humidiſſimum* (Lib. 11. Cap. 37.) and it is not to be thought that nature ſhould place in the organ which is the capital inſtrument of underſtanding and

* Two thin membranes, which incloſe the ſubſtance or marrow of the brain.

and knowledge, ſuch a temperament as muſt incumber, or diſorder reaſon. If it be ſaid, that notwithſtanding this natural moiſture in which the brain of man exceeds that of brutes, it ſtill remains, as to the temperament, adapted to the beſt uſe of reaſon, I anſwer, that allowing moiſture of itſelf to be no impediment, yet, who knows the proportion or quantity of moiſture in the brain, requiſite for performing the functions for which the organ is deſtined? And conſequently ſaying, that the proportion is better in man than woman, is ſaying nothing at all.

Many, however, will object againſt this moiſture, that the inhabitants of moiſt and foggy countries, are noted for heavineſs and ſtupidity; and that

on

on the contrary, it is in the clear and dry countries, that genius ſhines in its enchanting radiancy. But be they few or many who ſpeak thus, they talk without book. It is ſaying, that they have removed the clouds from the horizon, and transferred them into the ſphere of the brain; that in rainy countries, the darkneſs of the atmoſphere obſcured the ſoul, and that in thoſe climates which enjoy a ſerene ſky, the ſuperior luſtre of the day imparted a greater brilliancy to the underſtanding. They might, more rationally, ſay that in the more airy and luminous countries, objects being more viſible, they diſtract the ſoul more through the inlet of the eyes, and thus render it leſs fit for ſpeculation and mental exerciſes; as we per-

ceive the thread of thought, and the chain of inferences, to be more coherent in the darkneſs of the night, than in the reſplendency of the day. Let thoſe who account moiſt countries ſcarce capable of producing men of any accuteneſs, turn their eyes a little to the Dutch and the Venetians, who, for knowledge and capacity, are inferior to no nation in Europe, though the former live amidſt the waters, and the latter may be ſaid to have ſtolen part of their territories from the fiſhes; and even here in Spain, we have before our eyes the Aſturians, who, though dwelling in a province the moſt ſubject to fogs and rains of any in the whole kingdom, are particularly noted of for accuteneſs and activity. But where is the wonder of this?

this? Dolphins live in quarters ſufficiently moiſter, being ever in the deep waters, and yet throughout all nature, there are not animals of a more noble inſtinct, nor which, whether through affection, or imitation of manners, become ſo familiar with man. For, as may be ſeen in Geſner, they ſhew great tenderneſs towards thoſe from whom they derive their being, when enfeebled by age. They have been ſeen to guide men in the courſe of a voyage, and even to pay a regard to their dead, removing them to ſome ſecret place, though, at the hazard of being devoured by ſea monſters. On the other hand, birds, who moſtly live in the cleareſt air, nearly beyond the verge of vapours, ſometimes wafted along by the winds, then ſettling on the ſummits

of mountains, ſhould be more ſagacious than the beaſts of the field.

By the ſame reaſon, the Egyptians ſhould be the moſt ingenious men in the world, the air of that country being as clear as any on the whole globe; ſcarce ſuch a thing as a cloud is ſeen in Egypt, from one end of the year to the other, that the ſoil would produce nothing, were not the want of rain ſupplied by the overflowing of the river Nile; and though Egypt was venerated for ſome ages, as the ſeat of the moſt refined literature, and miſtreſs of ſciences; and though Pythagoras, Homer, Plato, and other great geniuſſes of Greece, travelled thither to improve in philoſophy and mathematics, this is no abſolute

proof

proof of the ſuperiority of their parts, to thoſe of other nations; no, it only ſhews the ſciences to have, as it were, rambled about on earth, reſiding ſometimes in one place, and ſometimes in another. The like may be ſaid of the valley of Lima in our American poſſeſſions, where the ſky is ſo clear, that they know nothing of rain, and its fertility is entirely owing to a dew, and a delightful temperature between cold and heat; and yet, the natives are ſo far from being remarkable for comprehenſiveneſs of underſtanding, or quickneſs of diſcernment, that the Pizarros, who conquered them, found them more eaſily caught by ſtratagems, than the Mexicans conquered by Cortez's arms.

I am not ignorant, that the inhabitants of Beotia, were in ancient times, looked upon to be ſo very dull and blockiſh, that *Bœoticum ingenium*, & *Bœotica ſus*, were nick-names for a ſtupid man, or woman, and that this defect in their underſtandings, was attributed to the thick and foggy air of that country, agreeable to what Horace ſays in one of his epiſtles. *Bœotum in craſſo jurares aëre natum*, you would have ſworn him born amidſt the foggy air of Beotia. Yet have I ſome reaſon to believe, that thoſe ancients have been wanting in juſtice to Beotia, and miſtake the ignorance ariſing from a want of application for an inherent incapacity. To which reproach, might likewiſe concur Bæo-

tia's,

tia's confining on Attica, where literature flouriſhed ſo eminently, that one province, being the theatre of eloquence and wiſdom, would make the adjoining appear an uncultivated colony of barbariſm. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Bœotia produced ſome firſt rate geniuſes, as Pindar, the chief of the lyric poets, Plutarch, than whom in the opinion of the illuſtrious Bacon, antiquity never produced a greater man; not to mention the brave Epaminondas. And I even conceive that in the more remote ages of antiquity, there was a time when the Bæotian's ſurpaſſed all their neighbours, and even all other Europeans, in the cultivation of arts and ſciences: for Cadmus, who quitting Phænicia, firſt introduced the

alphabet into Greece, and was the inventor of writing, ſettled in Bœotia, where he built the city of Thebes. In Bœotia, likewiſe was Mount Helicon dedicated to the Muſes, who, from thence were named Heliconides; and from this mount, iſſued the famous fountain of Aganippe, conſecrated to the ſame imaginary goddeſſes, the water of which, was believed to be to poets as wine, raiſing them to delightful raptures, and firing their brain with enthuſiaſtic ecſtaſies. The origin of all theſe fictions, ſeems to be that there was a time when poetry was remarkably cultivated in Bœotia, But granting that the Bœotians were naturally dull and heavy, how will it be proved that this proceeded from the moiſture of the country, and not

from

from other latent cauſes, eſpecially as we ſee other moiſt countries lying under no ſuch reproach; therefore let not moiſture any longer labour under the unjuſt reproach of being incompatible with wit; and be it allowed as a certain truth, that no ſuch argument can afford any ſatisfactory proof that women are inferior in reaſon and underſtanding to men.

SECTION XV.

Father Malebranche argues in another manner, and denies women to be equal in underſtanding to men by reaſon of the fibres of their brain being more ſoft and impreſſible. I, for my part, know not whether there be

any

any thing in this ſuppoſed ſoftneſs or not. I have read two anatomical treatiſes which ſay not a word about it. The female brain having been ſuppoſed moiſter, it has been inferred to be likewiſe ſofter; yet, this is no abſolute conſequence. Ice is moiſt, and far from being ſoft; metal in fuſion is ſoft, but cannot be ſaid to be moiſt. Woman, as of the more ſoft and pliant temper, has likewiſe been conjectured to be more ſoft in the material part of her compoſition: for ſome men of ſuperficial knowledge form their ideas, by ſuch analogies; and afterwards, not being duly digeſted, ſuch reveries ſpread even among perſons of ſenſe.

But

But be it ſo, what analogy is there between the ſoftneſs of the brain, and the dubility of reaſon? Or rather, the brain being thus more impreſſible by the ſpirits, one would conceive it better adapted to mental operations, and this argument receives an additional force from our author's doctrine, for in another part, he ſays that the veſtiges, left in the brain by the motion of the animal ſpirits, being the lines with which the imaginative faculty delinates in it the effigies of objects; the more ſtrongly marked and more diſtinct; thoſe veſtiges and impreſſions are, the more clearly and ſenſibly will the underſtanding perceive the very objects themſelves. *Cur igitur imaginatio conſiſtat in ſola virtute*

qua

qua mens ſibi imagines objectorum efformare poteſt, eas imprimendo, ut ita loquar, fibris cerebri, certé quo veſtigia Spirituum Animalium quæ ſunt veluti imaginum illarum lineamenta erunt diſtinctiora et grandiora, eo fertius et diſtinctius mens objecta illa imaginabitur, Lib. 2. *De Inquirenda Veritate,* Part I. Cap. I.

Now it is clear, that the brain being ſofter and its fibres more flexible, the ſpirits will more eaſily impreſs it, and the veſtiges be more ſtrongly marked and diſtinct. The reſiſtance of the ſubſtance being leſs; and the more diſtinct, as the fibres in males, being ſomething rigid, make, by their power of elaſticity,

ſome

ſome effort to recover their former poſition; and thus, in ſome meaſure, face the path made by the motion of the ſpirits, whereas the fibres of female brains, being more flexible, will form thoſe images larger and diſtinct, and women of courſe, will have better perceptions of the objects.

Let it not be thought, that on this account, I am for giving more underſtanding to women than men, I only take the liberty of animadverting on FatherMalebranche and indicating that ſuch an advantage may be inferred from his doctrine, contrary to what he himſelf aſſerts in another part of his work; but what I affirm is, that by theſe philoſophical ratiocinations, any thing may be proved,

and

and nothing is really proved. Every one philoſophiſes according to his fancy; and did I write from adulation, humour, or to diſplay my wit, I could eaſily, by deducting a chain of conſequences from received principles, ſhew that man's underſtanding, weighed in the balance with female capacity, would be found ſo light as to kick the beam. But I am far from any ſuch thoughts, all I intend, is to declare my mind, and I therefore aver, that neither Father Malebranche, nor any other writer hitherto, knew the preciſe mode or ſpecific mechaniſm, by which the organs of the head aſſiſt the faculties of the ſoul. We know not yet, how fire burns, or water freezes though objects of ſenſe and within the verge of

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the ſight and touch; yet would Father Malebranche, with the other Carteſians perſuade us, that they have clearly ſeen into all that paſſes in the moſt ſecret receſſes of the rational ſoul.

Nor can I at all agree with thoſe poſitions, which reducing the whole to mechaniſm, make the mind as materially delineating the images of objects in the brain, as the burin on the copper-plate. I am not ignorant of the I may ſay, unſurmountable difficulties connected with Ariſtotle's intentional ſpecies; but an inference from the premiſſes is, that all we do on both ſides, is no more than touching the hem of nature's outward garment. We all grope in the dark, and none

ſo

ſo blind as they who fancy they ſee things in the cleareſt light, like Harpacta, a female ſlave of Seneca's, who, even after a total deprivation of ſight, would inſiſt it was as ſtrong as ever. It is certain, that they who moſt pleaſe themſelves with their extraordinary inſight into natural phenomena, are the moſt expoſed to dangerous errors, as he who walks boldly on in a dark place is moſt in danger of making a falſe ſtep, whereas he who conſidering the darkneſs of the way, treads with circumſpection, cannot well receive any great hurt.

But, allowing father Malebranche, and the Carteſian tribe, that the repreſentation of objects is conveyed to the mind by material delineations ſo formed

formed in the brain by the courſe of the ſpirits, it muſt likewiſe be allowed, that the brain of women being ſofter, the images muſt, from the impreſſiblity of the ſubſtance, be more ſtrongly marked, and what is to be inferred from this? Why, father Malebranche's doctrine admits of both inferences, that women have a better underſtanding than men, and likewiſe that they have not ſo good an underſtanding. The firſt is implied in the place above cited, and the ſecond, becauſe when he harangues againſt women, he makes thoſe very lively imaginations proceeding from the more ſtrongly marked delineations to impede the right underſtanding of the objects. *Cum enim tenuiora objecta ingentes in delicatis cerebri fibris excitent*

 motus,

*motus, in menta protinus etiam excitant ſenſatiònes ita vividas, ut tota occupetur** Lib. 2. Part 2. Cap. 1.)

But the latter is contrary to all reaſon, for the larger the images, ſo far from not giving juſt repreſentations of the objects, even though theſe be ſmall, are rather helpful to perception, as corpuſcles are beſt ſeen through the miſcroſcope. And the livelineſs of the imagination, not being ſo exceſſive as to riſe to frenzy, contributes greatly to a right conception of the object.

But

* For ſmall objects exciting great motions in the delicate fibres of the brain, theſe inſtantaneouſly excite ſuch forcible ſenſations in the mind, that it is intirely taken up with them.

But this greater ſoftneſs of the brain, in reality, neither implys the one nor the other, neither a ſuperiority nor an inferiority in the female intellects, as the impreſſions of the ſpirits, cannot from it be inferred to be larger; and from this largeneſs, it is that both the contrarieties are deduced, The reaſon is, the movement or impulſe of the ſpirits may be proportioned to the impreſſibility of the ſubſtance, and thus make no greater impreſſion than that of more rapid ſpirits on a brain of a ſtronger texture, as by moderating the action of the hand as ſuperficial a line may be traced on wax, as thoſe which a greater force of the hand would make in lead. After all, what I think of this whole ſyſtem of female brains is that bodily motions may be leſs vigorous and for-

cible in them than men, as the nerves which have their origin in the fibres of the brain, and the ſpinal marrow muſt of courſe be leſs ſtrong or moved by fainter impulſes; but not that the mental operations of women are more or leſs perfect.

SECTION XVI.

But it is time to ſtrike out of the rugged paths of philoſophy into the flowery walks of hiſtory, and prove by examples, that female intellects are equally capable of the moſt abſtruſe ſciences, as thoſe of men; and this is indeed the beſt way for convincing the generality, all examples weighing more with them than reaſons,

ſons, which it is not given to all to comprehend. To enumerate every example occuring in hiſtory, would be tedious; I ſhall only cite ſome of thoſe women, who, in theſe latter ages, have moſt diſtinguiſhed themſelves by literature and ſcience, both in our own country, Spain, and the neighbouring kingdoms.

Ann de Cervaton, lady of the bedchamber to Queen Ferdinand the Catholic's ſecond conſort, was celebrated for her learning and parts, even more than for her beauty; for which ſhe was looked upon as abſolutely the fineſt woman of the whole court. In Lucio Mareneo Siculo, are ſome Latin letters written by the author to that lady, and her anſwers in the ſame language.

Iſabella de Joya, who flouriſhed in the ſixteenth century. It is related of her, that ſhe preached in the cathedral of Barcelona, to the admiration of a crouded audience (I ſuppoſe the prelate who allowed of ſuch a novelty, was of opinion that the Apoſtle's injunction, in the firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians againſt women ſpeaking in church, admits of ſome exceptions equally with that in the firſt epiſtle to Timothy, againſt their teaching, it being certain from the Acts of the Apoſtles, that Priſcilla, a fellow labourer with the ſame Apoſtle, inſtructed Apollos in the doctrine of the goſpel. Afterwards going to Rome, in in the pontificate of Paul III. ſhe ſolved many knotty points in the books

of

of the ſubtile Scotus, before the whole college of Cardinals, and highly to their ſatisfaction. But an honour incomparably greater is, her having in that capital of the univerſe, brought over a conſiderable number of Jews to the Catholick religion.

Louiſa Sigea, a native of Toledo, but of French extraction, beſides her profound acquaintance, both with philoſophy, and philology, was remarkable for her knowledge in languages, being ſuch a miſtreſs of the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac, that ſhe wrote to Pope Paul III. a letter in each of thoſe five languages. Her father Diego Sigeo, being afterwards called to the court of Liſbon, to be preceptor to the duke of Bra-

ganza. The Infanta, King Emannel's daughter, having a great taſte for literature, would have the learned Louiſa about her perſon; and recommended her to a very honourable and very advantageous marriage.

Oliva Sabuco de Nantes, born at Alearaz, had a moſt ſublime and extenſive genius, which ſhines forth in her writings, on phyſical, medical, moral, and political ſubjects. But what ſhe derives her greateſt luſtre from, was her new phiſiological and medical ſyſtem; in which, contrary to all the ancients, ſhe maintains that it is not the blood which nouriſhes our bodies, but that white juice, which iſſuing from the brain, pervades all the nerves; and to diſtempers in

this

this vital lymph, ſhe attributes moſt diſeaſes and complaints. This ſyſtem, which was neglected in Spain, raiſed the admiration and enflamed the curioſity of England, that now foreigners aſſume the honour of it, though in reality, due to a Spaniſh lady. And here I cannot but lament the unhappy, I was going to call it perverſe, temper of my countrymen; who, that they may like the production of their own country, it muſt be made up and ſold to them by foreigners. It farther appears, that this eminent woman, was prior to the celebrated des Cartes in the opinion that the rational ſoul reſided in the brain, but extending it to the whole ſubſtance, and not like des Cartez, confining it to the pineal gland. Donna Oliva,

was

was ſo confident of her ability to defend her opinions however ſingular, that in the dedication of one of her works to the preſident of Caſtille, ſhe requeſts that an aſſembly of the moſt learned naturaliſts and phyſicians might be convened, offering to ſhew beyond denial, that the natural philoſophy and phyſic, then taught in the ſchools, were wide of the mark. She flouriſhed in the time of Philip II.

Bernarda Ferreyra, beſides her acquaintance with ſeveral languages, and the harmony of her poetry, was very well verſed in rhetoric, philoſophy, and mathematics. Her works are chiefly poetical; and our celebrated Lopez de Vega, as a teſtimony of his regard to the merit of this extraordi-

nary

nary lady, dedicated to her, that beautiful elegy, intitled *Phillis*.

Juana Morella, a native of Barcelona, was a prodigy of erudition. Her father being obliged to quit Spain for a homicide, fled to Lions in France, where the genius of this ſingular child emitting ſome ſcintillations of its future replendency, nothing was ſpared in giving her a ſuitable education; and ſhe made ſuch rapid progreſſes in the career of literature, that at the age of twelve years, (which was the year 1607) ſhe publicly maintained Theſes in philoſophy, and dedicated them to Margaret of Auſtria, Queen of Spain. Guy Patin, and he lived at that time, ſays, that in her eighteenth year, ſhe held

a public

a public diſputation in the Jeſuit's college at Lions. She had a profound knowledge of philoſophy, divinity, muſic, and juriſprudence, beſides ſpeaking fourteen languages; till at length, tired with the comparative vanity of all human excellencies, ſhe entered into the convent of St. Praxedis at Avignon.

The famous Mexico nun, ſiſter Juana Ines de la Cruz is univerſally known for the ſublimity, force, and erudition of her poems, that any encomium of her would be ſuperfluous. I ſhall only ſay, that her loweſt talent was that of poetry, though it be what has moſt raiſed her fame. Many Spaniſh poets greatly ſurpaſs her in harmony, but, perhaps not one equals

her

her in variety and extent of knowledge. She was natural, but ſomething deficient in energy. Her criticiſm on father Vieyra's ſermons, ſhews the poignancy of her wit; but it muſt be allowed not to come up to that of the matchleſs Jeſuit, whom ſhe attacks; and is it any thing ſtrange that a woman ſhould be inferior to that man, whom no preacher has hitherto equalled for ſublimity of thought, ſolidity of argument, and a perſpicuous force of expreſſion?

SECTION XVII.

France has produced many learned ladies, they having a greater opportunity for ſtudying, and, I believe, likewiſe,

likewiſe, greater liberty than with us. Having confined myſelf to the moſt celebrated of my own countrywomen, I flatter myſelf, the French ladies will excuſe my obſerving the like brevity with regard to them.

Suzan de Habert, wife to Charles de Jardin, an officer of the houſhold to king Henry III. underſtood philoſophy and divinity; was very well acquainted with the doctrines of the primitive fathers, and had acquired no ſuperficial knowledge of the Spaniſh, Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. But her real glory conſiſted more in her ſanctity of manners and devotion than in all the the vaſt compaſs of her learning.

Mary

Mary de Gourney, a native of Paris, and of an illuſtrious family. The learned Dominick Baudius, uſed to call her the *French Syren*. Her genius and literature were ſo celebrated, that there was ſcarce a great man who did not think it an honour to correſpond with her; in her cabinet, were found letters from the Cardinals de Richlieu, Bentivoglio, Perron, St. Francis de Sales, from the duke of Mantua, Erycius Puteanus, Juſtus Lipſius, Balzac, Maynard, Heinſius, Cæzar Capacio, Carlos Pinto, and many other of the moſt eminent literati of that age.

Magdalene Scuderi, very juſtly called the *Sappho of her age*, as undoubtedly

edly equal to that celebrated Grecian poeteſs for the beauty of her compoſitions; and for purity of manners and virtue, they are not to be named on the ſame day. She made her genius always ſubſervient to excellent purpoſes. Her Artameneſor, Cyrus the Great, and Clelia; which, after the manner of Barclay's Argenis, conceal under the veil of novels, many important pieces of real hiſtory, are exquiſite compoſitions, and, in my opinion, beyond any thing of the kind, written either in France or any other nation, Argenis alone excepted. The ſublimity and juſtneſs of the thoughts; the natural connection of the fable; the pathos and force of the arguments, the livelineſs of the deſcriptions, and the eaſy purity, majeſty, and energy

of

of the ſtile, form an admirable whole; and, as a ſtill greater embelliſhment, the love parts are conducted with the utmoſt decency; the moral virtues exhibited in the moſt engaging beauty, and the heroic ſhine in the moſt reſplendent brilliancy. Such was the regard paid to the aſtoniſhing literature of madam Scuderi, that all the academies, which admitted perſons of her ſex, honoured her with an invitation to become a member. In the year 1671, ſhe gained the French academy's prize of eloquence, which was equal to a formal declaration of that illuſtrious body, that ſhe exceeded all France in eloquence. Lewis XIV. who was never wanting to recompence merit, ſettled on her a penſion of 200 livres per year, and Cardinal Maza-

 rin,

rin, had, long before, bountifully remembered her in his will; another penſion ſhe enjoyed from the liberality of that excellent perſon Lewis de Boncherat, who ſo worthily filled the high office of Chancellor of France, that after a very uſeful and irreproachable life, ſhe died full of years and glory in 1701 *.

Antoniette

* Mr. De Saint Foix, in his hiſtory of the order of the holy Ghoſt ſays of lady Retz, ſpouſe to the Duke de Retz, a knight of that order: Her wit and taſte for the ſciences, were not leſs celebrated than her beauty. It was ſhe who as linguiſt to Catherine de Medicis, anſwered the ambaſſadors of Poland, who brought the Duke of Anjon the inſtrument of his election to that crown. *What a ſcandal, what a wretched age!* cries a man of letters on this occaſion; *ſo little acquainted with the Latin were the French noblemen,*

Antoniette de la Guardie, a French lady, whoſe mind and body were ſo ſuitable, that it was ſaid of her, nature had taken pleaſure to blend all the graces of the mind and body in one woman. She ſo far diſtinguiſhed herſelf in poetry, that at a time when that art was highly eſteemed, and conſequently much cultivated in France, all that large and populous kingdom could not afford a man able ſo much as to rival her. She paid the debt of nature in the year 1694, leaving a daughter who inherited all her genius;

noblemen, that not one was able to converſe with thoſe ambaſſadors, during that long journey. I believe, adds Mr. de Saint Foix, that it would be the ſame in our days; and I do not really ſee where the great hurt of it lies.

of which there could not be a more deciſive proof, than her gaining the French academy's prize of poetry.

Lady Mary Magdalene Gabriel de Montemart, daughter to the Duke de Montemart, and a benedictine nun, was born with every diſpoſition requiſite to the moſt abſtract and ſublime ſciences, having a moſt happy memory with equal penetration and judgment. In her childhood, ſhe made herſelf miſtreſs of the Spaniſh, Italian, and Greek; at the age of 15, being preſented to Maria Thereſa, of Auſtria, on that Princeſs's arrival at Paris, ſhe was admired by the whole court for her fluency and eloquence in ſpeaking Spaniſh. She was intimately acquainted, both with the antient

tient and modern philoſophy, ſcholaſtic, dogmatic, expoſitive and myſtic divinity. She ſignalized herſelf by ſome tranſlations highly celebrated, particularly, that of the firſt book of the Iliad; and employed her pen on morality, criticiſm, and natural philoſophy. Her letters were eſteemed ſuch a treaſure, that even Lewis XIV. himſelf always expreſſed great pleaſure at receiving any: the productions of her muſe were admirable but not many; and thoſe after reading them once, ſhe uſed to commit to the flames; a ſacrifice which her humility made of many other of her works, and would have made of all, had ſhe conſulted only her own ſentiments. She was no leſs eminent for devotion and her capacity for government equalled

her erudition. In regard to ſuch a conſtellation of endowments, ſhe was choſen Abbeſs General of the congregation of Fontevrard, of the order of St. Benedict, in which is this ſingularity, that though compoſed of a great number of monaſteries of both ſexes divided into four provinces, all are under the juriſdiction of the Abbey of Fontevrard, a magnificent monaſtry, and no leſs famous for the noble birth than the ſanctity of its members, counting no leſs than fourteen Princeſſes among its Abbeſſes, and of theſe five of the houſe of Bourbon. This lady diſcharged that high poſt with univerſal applauſe, and to the great edification and increaſe of her congregation.

Mary

Mary Jacqueline de Blemur, a benedictine nun, who, ſays the very learned father Mabillon, *en los Eſtud. Monaſtic Bibliot. eccleſiaſt.* Sect. XII. compoſed the *Benedictine year*, in ſeven quarto volumes, and likewiſe the lives of illuſtrious perſons of that order, in two volumes quarto.

Ann le Fevre, commonly known by the name of madam Dacier, was daughter to the very learned Tanaquil le Fevre, whom however ſhe equalled in erudition, and ſurpaſſed in eloquence and beauty of ſtile in her native language. Her capacity chiefly diſplayed itſelf in criticiſm, that at leaſt, relatively to prophane authors, there was not a man in her

time either in France or out of it, who did not refer to her judgment. She tranſlated ſeveral Greek authors, with the addition of valuable notes. Her paſſion for Homer drew her into ſeveral controverſies, though theſe only ſerved to ſhow her literature, judgment, and wit, to greater advantage: particularly, ſhe aſſerted the ſuperiority of the Greek poet to Virgil, againſt ſome critics who had openly endeavoured to bring him into diſrepute, as Monſieur de la Mothe of the French academy: and though ſome ſticklers for the Latin poet ſided with the academican, they could not deny his authority to be but of little weight as unacquainted with the Greek tongue in which Homer wrote; whereas his learned antagoniſt underſtood it

as well as any perſon living; and an impartial judge will farther conſider, that it is only a few Latin authors and not ſo much as one Greek, who place Virgil above or on a level with Homer; when all the Greeks and many of the Latins declare in favour of the latter. Velleius Paterculus, that charming hiſtorian, gives him this high encomium, *as he had nobody before him to imitate, ſo neither has any one appeared able to imitate him.* Madam Dacier died 1720, and in the ſeventy-ſixth year of her age.

SECTION. XVIII.

Italy rivals France in learned women, but for the ſame reaſon that we

reduce

reduce the French to a ſmall number, we ſhall obſerve the like conciſeneſs towards the Italians.

Dorothea Bucca, a native of Bologna, having from her infancy been deſtined for literature, made ſuch progreſſes in it, that the univerſity conferred on her a diſtinction, till then unprecedented, creating her a doctor; and accordingly, for many years, ſhe held lectures which were greatly frequented. She flouriſhed in the 15th century.

Iſotta Nogarola, born at Verona, was the oracle of her age; for beſides her profound knowledge in philoſophy and divinity, and the works of the fathers, ſhe was miſtreſs of ſeveral languages,

languages, and part of her character is, that for eloquence, ſhe was not inferior to the greateſt orators of the time; and one no common proof of her elocution is, that ſhe ſeveral times harangued the Popes Nicholas V. and Pius II. and made a moſt elaborate ſpeech at the council of Mantua, which the latter had convened, that all the Chriſtian Princes might enter into a league againſt the Turks. Some of Iſotta's works coming to the ſight of Cardinal Beſſarion, that illuſtrious patron of literature was ſo taken with her genius, that he made a journey from Rome to Verona, purely to pay her a viſit. This lady departed in the 38th year of her age, in the year 1466, verifying the Latin verſe

Immodicis

Immodicis brevis eſt ætas et rara ſenectus.

Which may be engliſhed,

Extremes are ſeldom laſting.

Laura Cereti, a native of Breſſcia, publickly taught philoſophy in that city, with general applauſe, at the giddy age of 18 years. She flouriſhed in the 16th century.

Caſſandra Fideli, was born at Venice, and ſo celebrated for her knowledge of the Greek tongue, philoſophy, divinity, and hiſtory, that there was ſcarce a prince of note in that age, who did not ſend her valuable tokens of his eſteem; and among Caſſandra's admirers, Pope Julius II. and Leo X.

Lewis

Lewis XI, of France, and their Catholic Majeſties King Ferdinand, and his Conſort Iſabella, particularly diſtinguiſhed themſelves. After a life of great uſefulneſs, having been the author of ſeveral excellent pieces ſhe died in the 102d. year of her age, 1567; a ſignal exception to the above-mentioned aphoriſm.

Catherine de Cibo, Ducheſs of Camerino, in the Marquiſate of Ancona, had a very uncommon knowledge of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and in philoſophy and divinity, ſhe was an adept, but the luſtre of her erudition, was farther enhanced by her ſublime piety. The firſt convent of Capuchins, was of her building. She died in the year 1557.

Martha

Martha Marchina, a Neapolitan, with a genius ſo far ſuperior to her mean birth, that amidſt all the embarraſſments of trade and labour, ſhe early made herſelf miſtreſs of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and diſtinguiſhed herſelf by ſeveral ingenious poems. Such endowments, however, did not raiſe her from that low ſphere in which ſhe had been born: for, removing to Rome, with a proſpect of a more eaſy ſituation, having received many aſſurances of affluence and independency, it is known that ſhe laboured hard to ſupport her family by making ſoap. Had a ſpirit of that caſt enjoyed leiſure, and the other advantages neceſſary to a ſtudious diſpoſition, ſhe would undoubtedly have

proved

proved a prodigy of learning, and have received the ſame honours as ſome academies have been pleaſed to confer on her ſex. She died at the age of 46 years, in 1646.

Lucretia Helena Cornaro, an additional ornament to that illuſtrious family. If ſhe brings up the rear in this liſt of Italian learned ladies, as the moſt modern, yet in dignity, we may ſay, without the leaſt injuſtice to any one, that the precedence is due to her. This lady, the honour of her ſex, was born in the year 1646. A ſtrong propenſity to learning declared itſelf even in her infancy, and her progreſſes were anſwerable to ſuch early commencements: for after acquiring a grammatical knowledge of

the

the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, ſhe made herſelf miſtreſs of the European living languages. In philoſophy, mathematics, and divinity, ſhe ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed herſelf, that the univerſity of Padua unanimouſly reſolved to make her Doctor of Divinity, and it would certainly have taken place, if not oppoſed by Cardinal Barbarigo Biſhop of the city, from a reſpectful deference to St. Paul's direction, that women are not to teach in the church; therefore not to violate that canonical rule, neither be wanting in regard due to Helena's extraordinary merit, ſhe was created Doctor of philoſophy, many Princes and Princeſſes, coming from various parts of Italy, to grace the ceremony. Such an aſſemblage of ſcience and literature, could

only

only be ſurpaſſed, as it was by her ſingular piety. At the age of twelve years, ſhe made the vow of virginity, and the addreſſes of a conſiderable German prince, who, even offered to obtain his holineſs's diſpenſation, and the entreaties of her parents, could make no impreſſion on her firmneſs; that to quench at once the hopes of many other importunate ſuitors, ſhe determined to enter into a Benedictine nunnery; but being hindred by her father, ſhe went as far as ſhe could, renewing before the Abbot of the monaſtery of St. George, her vow of virginity and other religious vows, as an oblate of the order of St. Benedict. This devout ſacrifice of her liberty was followed by ſo exemplary a life within her father's

houſe, as would have been admired in a convent. Such was her love of retirement, and ſuch her reluctance againſt appearing in public, that, though in compliance with her father's repeated commands, ſhe did ſometimes come into company, it affected her ſo, that ſhe uſed to ſay *this obedience will be the death of me.* And indeed, her mundane life was but ſhort, paſſing to a better ſtate in her thirtieth year, welcomed by angels, and lamented by mortals; leaving behind her many works, as precious monuments of her piety and learning. Several authors have compoſed formal penegyrics on this extraordinary woman, particularly Gregorio Leti in his *Raguallos Hiſtoricos*, or a *Hiſtorical Collections*, in which he terms her a

Heroine

Heroine of Literature, Prodigy of Science, an Angel in Beauty and Purity. *

SECTION XIX.

Germany, amidſt all its dreary froſts and ſnows, preſents us with a woman, ſhining in the warmeſt irradiations of genius, the fine arts and erudition.

 This

A learned Italian lady of our own times, is Signora Angleſe, daughter to a creditable tradeſman in Milan, famed, throughout all Europe, for her knowledge of the ſcholaſtic languages and a profound treatiſe on Analyſis, which, beſides elogiums tranſmitted to her from all ſcientifical ſocieties has gained her a profeſſorſhip of mathematics in the univerſity of Bologna. Her ſtudies, her ſucceſſes, nor the intreaties

This was the famous Anna Maria Schurman, the glory of upper and lower Germany, being born at Cologne, and by deſcent a Fleming: a more general capacity has never been ſeen in either ſex; her comprehenſive mind embracing all arts and ſciences; every difficulty in them yielded to her penetration. In her ſixth year

treaties of her father, have not been able to extinguiſh the call which ſhe conceives to have felt in her childhood, to enter among the *Blue Girls*: than which there are few orders more auſtere. Since her father's death, ſhe has given herſelf up to the moſt ſublime devotion; and has ſacrificed to chriſtian ſelf denial, all thoſe enjoyments to which her fine qualities and literary acquirements had already made her way, among the better part of mankind. *Obſervations ſur l'Italie*, &c.

year ſhe could cut moſt delicate figures in paper, without any teacher or pattern; at eight, ſhe, in a few days, learned to draw and colour flowers in a maſterly manner: in her tenth year, only three hours practice brought her to an admirable delicacy in embroidery; but her talents for more exalted employments lay hidden till, in her thirteenth year they declared themſelves on this occaſion. As her brothers uſed to learn their leſſons at home, it was obſerved that in their repeating them when they were at a loſs or ſaid wrong, Anna Maria uſed to put them right; though, while they were conning their leſſons, ſhe ſeemed wholly taken up with her needle. This ſign, together with others which ſhe frequently gave of her diſpoſition and

 capacity,

capacity, determined her father to let her proceed in the career of literature at her own pleaſure. Accordingly it was with aſtoniſhing rapidity and no leſs accuracy that Miſs Schurman ranged the vaſt expanſe of ſacred and prophane learning, attaining at length to the poſſeſſion of almoſt every human ſcience, together with divinity and a reflective knowledge of the ſcriptures, ſcarce ever parallelled. She was perfectly acquainted with the German, Dutch, Engliſh, French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldean, Arabic, and the Ethiopian languages; and her poetical genius has left ſeveral monuments ſtill much eſteemed. She excelled in the liberal arts no leſs than in the ſciences and languages. Beſides her ſkill in

touching

touching ſeveral inſtruments; ſhe had a ſcientific knowledge of muſic. She likewiſe handled the pencil, chizzel and burin with great delicacy. It is ſaid that in a waxen image of herſelf, and of her own making, ſome pearls appeared ſo natural, that they were not imagined to be wax, till ſhe pricked them with a needle. Her letters were very much eſteemed, not only for the elegancy of the ſtile, but likewiſe for the inimitable beauty of the hand, that any little piece of her writing was laid up in muſeums as a moſt valuable curioſity. There was ſcarce a perſonage of note in her time who did not ſend her tokens of his eſteem, and, at the ſame time, deſired her correſpondence as a favour. Louiſa Maria Gonzaga, Queen of

Poland, in her journey to that kingdom, condeſcended to pay Miſs Schurman a viſit at her own houſe. She declined marriage; though many very advantageous matches were offered her, eſpecially M. Catoe, penſionary of Holland and likewiſe an excellent poet, who compoſed ſome very polite verſes in praiſe of his charmer when ſhe was only fourteen years of age. This incomparable woman, who deſerved immortality, if immortality on earth be deſirable, died in the year 1678, in the ſeventy-firſt year of her age.

SECTION XX.

Omitting many other learned women, who have done honour to their ſeveral

ſeveral countries, I ſhall conclude with a late inſtance from Aſia, as one evidence among many, that female abilities are not confined to Europe alone.

This ſhall be of the beautiful, learned, and virtuous *Sitti*.* Maani, ſpouſe to the famous travellor Peter de la Valle. Maani was born in Meſopotamia, thus that happy province within which, ſome expoſitors place paradiſe had the honour of producing two Rachels; it being certain that Haran where Jacob's beloved wife received her birth, was a place in Meſopotamia. Being early diſtinguiſhed

* A title among the Perſians, equal to that of *Lady*

diſtinguiſhed not leſs for her ſublime genius, and lively underſtanding, than a beautiful perſon, ſuch a character raiſed in Mr. de la Valle a deſire of ſeeing this admirable young lady. Her converſation improved his curioſity into love and an earneſt purſuit of paſſing through life with her in the moſt tender connection. Maani, now Mrs. la-Valle, won by the affectionate entreaties, and the ſolid reaſonings of her huſband, exchanged the Chaldean worſhip for that of Rome, and prevailed with her parents to join in her converſion. The literary progreſs made by this amiable Aſiatic in a few years, (for like a flower ſhe was blaſted in her bloom) are incredible, making herſelf miſtreſs, not only of what learning was within the verge of thoſe countries,

countries, but farther came to understand twelve different languages. Her virtues excelled her literary acquirments; and among those, her valour, as most foreign from her sex, shone with distinguished lustre, having with sword and pistol bravely seconded her husband in two or three defensive rencounters. This lady so singular for her beauty, her accomplishments, her virtues, and travels, was taken off near Ormus, in the twenty-third year of her age, by a fever, truly malignant. Thus to the grief of all who knew her, died the modern Rachel, so nearly resembling the ancient, as if nature and fortune had industriously formed the resemblance. Both natives of Mesopotamia, both of admirable beauty, both married to foreigners and persons of

great

great merit, both exchanging the worſhip of their country for that of their huſbands, both ſpending part of life in peregrinations with their huſbands, and at length both died in the flower of their age, and on a journey. But in their obſequies the conſort of one ſeems very different from that of the other, Mr. de la Valle, in regard and elegance much ſurpaſſing the patriarch Jacob. The latter buried his Rachel on the ſame road where ſhe died, which apparently ſpeaks a want of due regard, but the conſtant affection of the patriarch muſt incline us to ſuppoſe that it was not without ſome powerful reaſon either myſtic or natural; beſides he carefully recommended Rachel's corpſe to Joſeph, acquainting him with the place

of

of its interment Mr. la Valle diſcharged his laſt duty with very ſingular circumſtances: for after embalming the body of his adored Maani in the moſt coſtly manner, and laying it in a very magnificent coffin, he carried it with him in his travels over Aſia and other parts, for four years ſucceſſively, till his arrival at Rome, there he depoſited thoſe precious remains in his family vault, in the church of Santa Maria de *Ara Cœli*, and with all the ſplendor and ſolemnity conſiſtent with the ceremony; Mr. de la Valle himſelf pronouncing the funeral oration till exceſs of grief actually ſtopping his voice, his eyes poured forth the peroration in floods of tears.

SECTION

SECTION XXI.

In this catalogue of learned women, all thoſe of antiquity are omitted, as occuring in various books; and many of the modern, to avoid prolixity. It is ſufficient to know, and indeed it ſeems the principal point, that the generality of women, applying themſelves to literature or the ſciences, have excelled; whereas among men of ſtudious profeſſions, ſcarce three or four out of a hundred, turn out real ſcholars.

But leaſt women ſhould from this reflection, take occaſion to conceit themſelves even of a ſuperior capacity to men, they muſt be told as a check

to ſuch preſumption, that ſuch inequality in literary progreſſes, is owing to this; that thoſe women only, in whom either they who have the care of their education, or they themſelves perceive a particular diſpoſition and aptitude for ſcientifical attainments, are put to a formal courſe of ſtudy; whereas in men no ſuch choice is made, their fathers, without minding either their capacity, or incapacity, ſend them to ſchool, then to the univerſity, as poſſibly being their moſt ready way of providing for their ſons, or even make their fortune: And the generality of men, not being of very bright and comprehenſive parts, their progreſſes in learning muſt neceſſarily make no great figure.

Father

Father Fejoo *having for reaſons beſt known to himſelf thought fit to paſs over the females of theſe iſlands, I take the liberty of inſerting three or four, in commemoration of a few out of many, after the example of my original.*

Conſtantia Grierſon, one of the moſt extraordinary women that this or any other age has produced, was born in the county of Kilkenny, in Ireland, (Mrs. Barber's preface to her poems) She died in the the year 1733, at the age of twenty-ſeven, and was allowed long before to be an excellent ſcholar, not only in Greek and Roman literature, but in hiſtory, divinity, philoſophy,

phy, and mathematics. She gave a proof of her knowledge, in the Latin tongue, by her dedication of the Dublin edition of Tacitus to the Lord Carteret; and by that of Terence, to his ſon, to whom ſhe likewiſe wrote a Greek epigram. She compoſed ſeveral fine poems in Engliſh, ſeveral of which are inſerted by Mrs. Barber among her own. When the Lord Carteret was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he obtained a patent for Mr. Grierſon, her huſband, to be the King's printer, and to diſtinguiſh and reward her uncommon merit, had her life inſerted in it. Beſides her parts and learning, ſhe was alſo a woman of great virtue and piety. Mrs. Pilkington has recorded ſome particulars of Mrs. Grierſon, and tells us, that "when about

" eighteen years of age, ſhe was
" brought to her father to be inſtruc-
" ted in midwifry; that ſhe was miſ-
" treſs of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and
" French, and underſtood the mathe-
" matics as well as moſt men: and
" what, ſays Mrs. Pilkington, made
" theſe extraordinaty talents yet more
" ſurprizing was, that her parents
" were poor illiterate country people;
" ſo that her learning appeared like
" the gift poured out on the apoſtles,
" of ſpeaking all languages without
" the pains of ſtudy."

Lady Jane Grey was of the blood-royal of England by both parents. Her father, the Duke of Suffolk, having himſelf a tincture of letters, employed his two chaplains as tutors to his

his daughter, and under their inſtructions ſhe made ſuch a proficiency as amazed them. Her own language ſhe ſpoke and wrote with peculiar accuracy. The French, Italian, Latin, and eſpecially Greek, were as natural to her as her own. She not only underſtood them perfectly, but ſpoke and wrote them with the greateſt facility and terſeneſs. She was verſed likewiſe in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic, and all this while a mere child. She had alſo a ſedateneſs of temper, a quickneſs of apprehenſion, and a ſolidity of judgment that enabled her not only to become the miſtreſs of languages, but of ſciences, ſo that ſhe thought, ſpoke, and reaſoned upon ſubjects of the greateſt importance, in a manner that ſurprized even thoſe, who from

their own abilities were not much inclined to eſteem what the reſt of the world would have thought very extraordinary. With theſe high endowments ſhe had ſo much mildneſs, humility, and modeſty, that ſhe ſet no value at all upon thoſe acquiſitions. She was naturally fond of literature, and that fondneſs was much heightened as well by the ſeverity of her parents, in the feminine part of her education, as by the gentleneſs of her tutor, Aylmer, in this: when mortified and confounded by the unmerited chiding of the former, ſhe returned with double pleaſure to the leſſons of the latter, and ſought in Demoſthenes and Plato, who were her favourite authors, that delight that was denied her in all the other ſcenes of life, in which

ſhe

ſhe mingled but little, and ſeldom with any ſatisfaction.

When the famous Roger Aſcham called on a viſit to the family in Auguſt, all the reſt of the ſex being out a-hunting in the park, he went to wait upon Lady Jane in her apartment, found her reading Plato's Phœdon. Aſtoniſhed at it, preſently after the firſt compliments were paſt, he aſked her why ſhe ſhould loſe ſuch paſtime as there needs muſt be in the park; at which ſhe anſwered, ſmiling "I wiſt all their ſport in the park is "but a ſhadow to that pleaſure I find "in Plato. Alas! good folk, they "never knew what true pleaſure "meant." This naturally leading him to enquire how a lady of her age, for

ſhe could not then be above fourteen at moſt, had attained to ſuch a depth of pleaſure both in the Platonic language and philoſophy, ſhe made the following very remarkable reply: "I "will tell you, and I will tell you a "truth which perchance you may "marvel at. One of the greateſt be- "nefits which ever God gave me, is "that he ſent me ſo ſharp and ſevere "parents, and ſo gentle a ſchool- "maſter. For when I am in preſence "either of father or mother, whether "I ſpeak, keep ſilence, ſit, ſtand, or "go, eat, drink, be merry, or ſad, be "ſewing, playing, dancing, or doing "any thing elſe, I am ſo ſharply taun- "ted, ſo cruelly threatened, yea pre- "ſently ſometimes with pinches, rips, "and bobs, and other ways, which I

"ſhall

" ſhall not name for the honour I bear
" them, ſo without meaſure miſor-
" dered, that I think myſelf in hell,
" till time come that I muſt go to Mr.
" Aylmer; who teacheth me ſo gently,
" ſo pleaſantly, with ſuch fair allure-
" ments to learning, that I think all
" the time nothing while I am with
" him; and when I am called from
" him, I fall on weeping, becauſe
" whatſoever I do elſe but learning, is
" full of grief, trouble, fear, and
" wholly miſliking unto me. And
" thus my book hath been ſo much
" my pleaſure, and bringeth daily to
" me more pleaſure and more, that in
" reſpect of it all other pleaſures in
" very deed be but trifles and troubles
" unto me." What reader is not melted with this ſpeech? What ſcholar

does not envy Aſcham's felicity at this interview? He was indeed very deeply affected with it, and to that impreſſion we owe the diſcovery of ſome further anecdotes concerning this lovely ſcholar.

Lady Jane's character receives a great luſtre from her moral and political life, that, take her for all in all, impartiality will rank her with any female worthy produced by the author; but in conformity to his ſuccinctneſs, ſhall avoid dwelling on farther particulars, and only mention the reſpectable names of the Counteſſes of Derby and Winchelſea, Carter, Rowe, Read, and the patriotic Mrs. Maccauley, at this preſent time writing a

Hiſtory

Hiſtory of England, in the ſtyle of a Lyttelton, and the ſpirit of a Sidney.

My opinion therefore is againſt all declamation about an inequality in the capacities of either ſex; but if women, to recriminate on thoſe impertinent deſpiſers of their genius for the arts and ſciences, are for throwing by the defenſive, and take upon them to act the offenſive part, and entertain themſelves with diſputing maſteries againſt men, they may uſe the arguments ſet forth in the preceeding part of this diſcourſe where we evince that the ſame phyſical maxims with which it is pretended to depreciate the capacity of women, rather make in favour of their underſtanding, as ſuperior to ours.

To

To which we ſhall add the authority of Ariſtotle himſelf, who, in ſeveral places teaches that, in all kinds of animals, expreſsly including the human ſpecies, the females are more cunning and ingenious than the males, particularly in his ninth book of the hiſtory of animals, Chap. I. where he pronounces the following ſentence: *In omnibus vero, quorum procreatio eſt, fæninam, & marem ſimili fere modo natura diſtinxit moribus, quibus mas diſſert à fœmina: quod præcipue tum in homine, tum etiam in iis, quæ magnitudine præſtent, & quadrupedes vivaparæ ſint, percipitur: ſunt enim fœminæ moribus mollioribus, miteſcunt celeriis, & malum facilius patiuntur: diſcunt-etiam, imitanturque ingenioſius.* Nature has

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in all ſpecies eſpecially the human and viviporous quadrupeds, diſtinguiſhed the mate, and female by particular qualities: the females being of a ſofter diſpoſition, and more patient and placable they likewiſe take a thing ſooner and are more ready at imitation.

Ariſtotle's authority thus giving to woman a delicacy and ſoftneſs of temper, and likewiſe a genius ſuperior to that of men, may have great weight with thoſe who carry their veneration of that philoſopher ſo far as to ſtile him the all *penetrative genius of nature*, and the apex of human capacity. But I muſt adviſe my fair clients, not to build too much upon Ariſtotle; for at the heels of the above compli-

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ment to their mind is the following cenſure on their heart.

Verum malitioſiores, aſtutiores fœminæ ſunt, i. e. but the females are much more ſpiteful, wiley and treacherous; and, though a little after he prefers them to men in that amiable attribute of compaſſion, he, in the very ſame ſentence brands them with envy, ſlander, and rancour; that I queſtion whether the women will agree to the philoſopher's giving them the ſuperiority in underſtanding, accompanied with ſuch ugly predicaments. It may, however, be reaſonably inferred that, if he who had ſo bad an opinion of their morals, allows them to be more underſtanding and ingenious, it could not be without manifeſt reaſon.

SECT.

SECTION XXII.

Here it will be proper to ſay ſomething of the aptitude of woman for the politer arts and civil occupations of a higher nature than thoſe in which they are commonly employed, as painting and ſculpture. If the women who have dedicated themſelves to theſe arts are not in any great number; thoſe few have afforded ſome excellent artiſts. Mention has already been made of the admirable Anna Maria Schurman, ſo celebrated for her ſkill in painting ſculpture, and engraving.

Italy, as the peculiar reſidence of the fine arts, has, among other celebrated female painters, produced three ſiſters, *Sophoniſba*, *Lucia*, and *Europa de Angoſciola*,

ſciola, the firſt of whom received an invitation from the conſort of Philip II. to come to her court in quality of her painter; and ſuch was her reputation that Pope Pious IV. deſired a potrait of that excellent Queen, by *Sophoniſba*, as the only pencil of that time, worthy to draw a princeſs of her eminent endowments.

Irene de Spilimberg a Venetian, ſo far excelled in the ſame art, that her pictures were frequently miſtaken for thoſe of Titian whoſe cotemporary ſhe was. Fate haſtily ſnatched her from life in her twenty ſixth year, her very competitor generouſly honouring her death with his tears.

Tereſa de Po, is at preſent, if ſtill living, in high eſteem at Naples for her painting; and many valuable pieces of her's are to be ſeen in the Marchioneſs de Villena's appartment, who continually employed her, and as generouſly rewarded her during her reſidence at Naples, whilſt the Marquis was Viceroy. Some Italian women have even diſtinguiſhed themſelves in ſtatuary. Propertia de Roſſi gained great reputation by the beauty of her deſigns, and delicate execution in marble ſtatues; but ſhe herſelf, and even all others were ſurpaſſed by the inimitable Labinia Fontana.

France, as far as comes within my knowledge, has only one female painter to boaſt; but of a merit equal to any praiſe, this was Iſabella Sophia

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de Cheron, more known by the name of Madam le Hai who, beſides her genius for poetry and muſic, was ſo celebrated for painting, that the Dauphin, ſon to Lewis the Great, employed her to paint him and his ſons. The ſame mark of eſteem ſhe received from Caſimir V. King of Poland, who, after his voluntary abdication of that crown, reſided at Paris; likewiſe from many of the firſt nobility in France, who condeſcended to go and ſet for their pictures at Iſabella's houſe and the prince of Condè himſelf paid her many viſits. The Emperor Joſeph offered her a conſiderable penſion if ſhe would remove to Vienna; and not prevailing, he ſent her models of his face, and thoſe of all the Imperial family. Beſides her accuracy in deſign

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and propriety of colouring, ſhe had a wonderful facility joining chearfully in any converſation without the leaſt interruption to her pencil. But what crowned her life was her piety and nobleneſs of mind. Theſe, to the ſenſible world, rendered her more eſteemable than all the exquiſite performances of her hand. Accordingly her death, which happened in the year 1711, was as triumphant as her life had been exemplary.

But the equality of the women to men, in diſpoſition and aptitude for the fine and noble arts, no where ſhews itſelf more than in muſic; they who apply themſelves to that charming art, making equal progreſſes for the time, as any of our ſex; and the maſ-

ters find no more difficulty in bringing girls forward than boys. I myſelf knew a female muſician, who, before ſhe had reached her ſixteenth year, was accounted a very pretty compoſer. It was deſignedly, that in the groupe of ſo many women juſtly celebrated, I have omitted the accompliſhments and qualities of our illuſtrious Queen Iſabella Farneſe; both becauſe my reſpect for her Majeſty would not allow me to touch on ſo ſacred a ſubject with ſo coarſe a pen; and becauſe another, much more adequate to the ſublime ſubject, has already given the world ſome glimpſes of the radiancies beaming from that illuſtrious perſonage.

SECT.

SECTION XXIII.

Some imagine all the premiſes to be at once overthrown by this ſingle reply: if women are equal to men in underſtanding and an aptitude for ſciences, and political and domeſtic government, how comes it that God inveſted man with the dominion and ſuperiority over woman; which he plainly does by this decree in the third Chapter of Geneſis: *Sub viri poteſtate eris: thou ſhalt be under the power of thy huſband*, as unqueſtionably the God of infinite wiſdom would confer the government on that ſex whom he had created moſt capable of ſuch a charge.

I anſwer, firſt, the preciſe ſenſe of that text cannot be certainly known, by reaſon of the difference of the verſions. The ſeptuagint read: *Ad virum converſio tua.* Aquila: *ad virum ſocietas tua.* Simmachus: *ad virum appetitus, vel impetus tuus, Thy deſire ſhall be to thy huſband.* And according to the very learned Benedict Pereyra, the plain ſenſe of the original Hebrew, rendered word for word, is; *Ad virum deſiderium, vel concupiſcentia tua. To man, as thy huſband, ſhall be thy deſire,* or *concupiſcence.*

Secondly, the domeſtic ſubjection of women may be affirmed to have been merely a penalty for the breach of God's injunction, and thus would not

not have taken place in the ſtate of innocence, at leaſt, the text ſays nothing to the contrary: or rather, had woman been originally ſubject to man in the ſtate of innocence, the all-wiſe and gracious Creator of both would not have omitted making this ſubordination known at the formation of Eve. Thus it was not on account of any ſuperior underſtanding in man that ſuch authority was conferred on him, but becauſe woman had led the way in the tranſgreſſion.

Thirdly, even had God originally inveſted man with an authoritative ſuperiority over women, that does not abſolutely conclude for man's intellectual ſuperiority: the reaſon is, that though both be equal in talents and

 underſtanding,

underſtanding, the decorum and tranquillity of the houſe and family required ſubordination, as otherwiſe it would have frequently been a ſcene of clamour and confuſion. All moral philoſophers, conformably to Ariſtotle, agree, that of all the ſeveral governments, the moſt defective, the moſt ſubject to convulſions, is that called Democracy, in which every individual of the republic ſhare in the political power; and between huſband and wife, ſuch a domeſtic government would be not only productive of endleſs confuſion, but really impracticable; for, on a difference of opinions among a people, the affair in queſtion may be decided by a majority of votes, whereas no ſuch thing can take place between huſband and wife, being only one to

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one; and thus, on a diſagreement, matters cannot be made up, the buſineſs of the family muſt be at a ſtand, unleſs ſet in motion by a proper exertion of ſuperiority. But why, allowing a neceſſity for one being ſuperior though their faculties for government are equal, did God confer that ſuperiority on man? Many reaſons may be alledged from his ſuperiority in other qualities, as ſteadineſs and courage, and thus better qualified to form proper reſolutions, and carry them into execution. But much better is it to ſay, that in the divine diſpenſations the motives generally lie without our verge.

SECTION XXIV.

I ſhall conclude this diſcourſe with an exception, which may be raiſed againſt the whole tenor of it; which is, to promote a perſuaſion, that both ſexes are equal in intellectual qualities, is ſo far from being of any public advantage, that it may rather occaſion many miſchiefs, as fomenting the pride and preſumption of women.

This difficulty may be removed only by ſaying, that in every thing, which comes under the cognizance of reaſon, it is of uſe to diſplay truth, and explode error. A true knowledge of things is valuable in itſelf, without regard to any other end.

Truth

Truth has an intrinſical worth, and of ſuch coin the whole treaſure of the underſtanding conſiſts. Some pieces indeed are more valuable than others, but not one is uſeleſs. Neither can the truth which we have proved, of itſelf elevate women to vanity and preſumption. If they be really our equals in mental faculties and in virtue, there is not the leaſt harm in their knowing it and thinking ſo. St. Thomas, ſpeaking of vain glory ſays, *that for any one to know and feel a complacency in any good or perfection of which he is poſſeſſed, is no ſin. Quod autem aliquis bonum ſuum cognoſcat, et approbet, non eſt peccatum.* (Sect. 2. 2. Quæſt. 132. Art. 1.) and in another part, ſpeaking of preſumption, he ſays, that this fault always ariſes from ſome

error

error in the underſtanding; therefore, as women's knowing what they are does not lead them to entertain any overweaning conceits of their accompliſhments, it cannot puff them up with vain-glory or preſumption; or rather, the rectitude of mind, which it is the ſcope of this diſcourſe to eſtabliſh by removing a vulgar error, adds no preſumption to women, and abates it in men.

But I claim a ſtill greater merit; the maxim which we have corroborated, ſo far from tending to any moral evil, may bring about much good. Let it be conſidered how many men this imaginary ſuperiority of talents has prompted to undertake criminal conqueſts on the other ſex. In all diſputes,

diſputes, a confidence or diffidence in one's own ſtrength, greatly contributes to the gain or loſs of the battle. Man relying on his ſuperiority in reaſoning, ſpeaks boldly; and woman, thinking herſelf inferior in argument, hears with deference and timidity. Who can deny but that here is a great preſage that he will compaſs his ends, and ſhe fall the victim?

Let women therefore be intimately convinced, cheriſh a ſtrong perſuaſion that they are not inferior in ſagacity to men, then will they confidently encounter their ſophiſms, and confound their ſeducers, however artful in diſguiſing their injurious fallacies with the pigments of argumentation. If women be brought to a perſuaſion

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that man, in reſpect to her, is an oracle, ſhe will liſten to the baſeſt propoſal, and acquieſce in the moſt notorious falſity, as a truth which ſhe is not to queſtion. It is well known to what ſhocking infamies thoſe heretics called Moliniſts have inveigled many women, who, before, were not only irreproachable in their lives, but of ſhining characters; and whence aroſe this ſadſeduction, but from entertaining ſtrange notions of man's ſuperior intellects, and an extreme miſtruſt of their own underſtanding, when thoſe poiſonous doctrines were urged to them ?

Another very intereſting conſideration is, that any woman yields the more eaſily to the man whom ſhe fancies to be greatly her ſuperior. A

man

man finds little reluctancy to ſerve another of higher birth, but where that circumſtance is equal, ſervitude goes ſorely againſt the grain. It is the very ſame in our caſe. If a woman is ſo far miſtaken as to think man of a much more noble ſex, and that as for herſelf, ſhe is but an imperfect animal, a kind of inferior being, ſhe will think it no ſhame to ſubmit to him, and the flattery of compliments and promiſe of obſequiouſneſs working on her own debaſing notion, ſhe may be led to account that honour which is the very worſt of infamies. Therefore, according to the energetic St. Leo, *Woman, entertain a due ſenſe of thy dignity. Know that our ſex is not in any reſpect preferable to thine; and therefore to allow man the dominion over*

thy

thy body, except when authoriſed by the ſacredneſs of marriage, is ſervile, infamous, and ſinful.

I have not yet diſplayed all the moral benefit, which would accrue from men and women being cured of their miſtake, with regard to the diſparity of the ſexes. It is my real belief, that this miſtake is of infinite prejudice to the marriage bed. Here ſome may imagine, I am running into a ſtrange paradox, yet, it is an evident truth, as a little attention will ſhew.

When ſome months are elapſed after two hearts were united in the bands of marriage, the woman loſes that high value, which was before placed on her as a new piece of furniture

niture. The huſband paſſes from fondneſs to coldneſs, and coldneſs often degenerates into a ſettled and declared contempt. The huſband once come to this culpable extremity, begins to play the maſter, and inſult his ſpouſe, building on the imagined ſuperiority of his ſex. Having imbibed thoſe common ſayings; *that the moſt knowing woman, knows as much as a raw ſchool boy; that their ſcull is as empty as a bladder full of ſoap-ſuds*, and the like elegant apothegms, every thing his poor wife ſays or does, he ſneers at. If ſhe argues, ſhe raves, every word is an abſurdity, and every action a blunder. The allurement of beauty, if ſhe has any beauty, is now overlooked. Fruition has thrown a ſhade over its brilliancy, and being at

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the huſband's command, it is under-valued. All the huſband thinks on, now is, that woman is a defectuous creature; and, when out of humour, the beſt word he can afford his wife, though ever ſo neat and cleanly, is, *that ſhe is a foul veſſel.*

Whilſt the unhappy wife labours under this tyranny, a gallant begins to ogle her; a ſmiling countenance muſt naturally pleaſe one wearied out of her life with frowns, contemptuous looks, and imperious geſtures. This ſuffices to bring about a converſation, in which, to be ſure, every thing is calculated to pleaſe her. Before, it was nothing but taunts, threats, and inſults; whereas, every word of the gallant, is fraught with

complaiſance,

complaiſance, praiſe, and adoration. Before, ſhe was not treated even like a woman; now, ſhe ſees herſelf exalted to a deity; before, ſhe was bluntly told that ſhe was a fool; now, ſhe hears herſelf extolled for incomparable wit and ſenſe; to the huſband, ſhe was an object of vain ridicule and diſguſt; the gallant is enraptured with her matchleſs beauties and accompliſhments; the huſband governs her like an imperious tyrant; the gallant approaches her with the awe of a ſubmiſſive ſlave. And though the enamorato, if a huſband, may act the ſame part as the other within his own walls, the wretched wife, unacquainted with this diſſimulation, thinks there is as much difference between them, as between an angel and a brute. In the

huſband, ſhe ſees a heart briſtled with thorns, and in the gallant, a heart crowned with flowers. On one ſide, ſhe ſees a chain of iron, on the other, a braclet of gold; here ſlavery, there deſpotiſm; with one a dungeon, the other a throne.

In ſuch a ſituation, how ſhall the moſt diſcrete, the moſt reſolute woman act? How reſiſt two impulſes, directed to one and the ſame end, one impelling her, the other gently drawing her? Without the powerful ſupport of heaven, fall ſhe muſt; and if ſhe falls, who can deny, but that it was by the hand of her own huſband. Had he not treated her with contempt, all the blandiſhments of the gallant, would not have prevailed againſt her.

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The rigour of the one, enforced the complaiſance of the other. Such are the evils which frequently ſpring from that mean opinion of the other ſex, which married men ſo often harbour and delight in exemplifying. Would theſe but throw aſide ſuch falſe maxims, their wives would ſpurn at every temptation to infidelity. God has enjoined affection to them, and that contempt and affection towards the ſame object can ever dwell in one heart, is utterly irreconcileable, a contradiction; and thus to treat a wife with contempt, is a breach of the divine command, than which, words cannot expreſs any thing more horrible.

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